

Application Number	20/04514/FUL	Agenda Item	
Date Received	18/11/2020	Officer	Dean Scrivener
Target Date	2/4/2021 (EOT Agreed)		
Ward	Petersfield		
Site	St Matthews Centre, Sturton Street		
Proposal	Erection of a building comprising student accommodation (C2) (113 rooms in 14no flats), including an ancillary reception building, part change of use of existing building from non-residential institution (D1) to cafe (A3), including outdoor terrace with associated development		
Applicant	Mr Sebastian Hayes		

<p>SUMMARY</p>	<p>The development does not accord with the Development Plan and is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The principle of student accommodation on this site is not supported due to the lack of an identified need being demonstrated, as well as a lack of satisfactory security measures preventing anti-social behaviour of students, given its location - The design, scale, height and massing of the proposed development would have a significant adverse impact on the character of the local area and is not in accordance with the Eastern Gate SPD - The overall scale of the building would significantly impose and dominate St Matthews Piece and result in harm to the Mill Road Conservation Area
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the excessive scale of the proposed building, protected trees would be removed and severely impacted, resulting in harm upon these trees which significantly contribute to the amenity of the local area. - Given the overall scale of the building, the proposal is considered to dominate St Matthews Piece and result in a loss of its recreational and environmental values - The proposal does not contribute any provision of open space and there is a lack of justification to demonstrate that an acceptable amount and design of open space can be delivered as part of the proposal - A significant proportion of the proposed cycle parking is not easily accessible and is inappropriately located, making it impractical for students to use and which would result in abandoned and inappropriate cycle parking
RECOMMENDATION	REFUSAL

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION/AREA CONTEXT

- 1.1 The application site is located at the St Matthews (former Howard Mallet) Centre. It comprises an existing rectangular building of one and two storeys, dark grey / black in appearance with large areas of glazing, which is occupied by the Cambridge School of Visual and Performing Arts (CSVPA). There is on-site car and cycle parking.

- 1.2 The site is located within the Eastern Gate Opportunity Area and Mill Road Conservation Area. It is directly adjacent to an area of Public Open Space (including play area) to the south and includes an area of Private Open Space to the east adjoining York Street. A number of mature London Plane trees are located around the perimeter of St Matthews Piece and the application site which have statutory protection through the Conservation Area designation and by virtue of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 1.3 The surrounding area is characterised by residential development which is 2, 2.5 and 3 storeys in height. To the west of the site turning the corner of New Street and Sturton Street is Anglia Ruskin University's Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education, a contemporary styled solid brick institutional building designed by Richard Murphy Architects.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application submitted proposes the erection of a building comprising student accommodation, including an ancillary reception / bin storage building, part change of use of existing building from a non-residential institution (D1) to cafe (A3), including an outdoor terrace, with associated landscaping, open space, car and cycle parking and infrastructure.
- 2.2 The proposal seeks to redevelop the site to provide 113 student rooms separated into 14 cluster flats, 12 of which would be located within three storeys (4 clusters on each main floor) of a long rectangular building with a fourth recessed storey on the roof top accommodating a pair of cluster flats. The accommodation is for the Cambridge School of Visual and Performing Arts (CSVPA). CSVPA occupies the St Matthew's Centre and teaches approximately 150 of its 430 students on the site.
- 2.3 The existing building is to be retained with the new proposed building being built as a 'floating' structure, part over the existing building and part jutting out over the car park towards New Street and private open space to the east. It would be supported on a series of timber stilts, some of which would rest

on the existing building with others extending to ground level. It would be clad in corrugated steel and dressed with terracotta baguettes positioned semi-randomly across the facade between and partly overlapping windows to the student rooms. The eastern side of the building would include two main lift cores finished in terracotta tiles extending full height and two powder coated aluminium 'zig-zag' balustrades providing stepped access from the external ground level to the first floor of the building. The two roof top clusters would be finished in standing seam zinc cladding in a modulated form. Access would be from the private open space to the east. A new café would be provided within the existing ground floor space with access into the surrounding parkland and a new south facing outdoor seating terrace located to the rear of the building.

- 2.4 Vehicular access to the site would be via the existing car park entrance on New Street, which gives access to car and cycle parking, including wheelchair accessible parking spaces. Two TPO'd trees along the frontage are proposed to be removed as a result of the building projecting significantly forwards towards New Street. Additional cycle parking is proposed at ground level and on the roof of the building.
- 2.5 A new footpath is proposed close to the eastern side of the building within the private protected open space. The footpath would provide a link from New Street, past the proposed new reception / refuse building to the lift / stair cores.
- 2.6 Given the large number of objections received by consultees and third-party representations, officers consider it appropriate to present the scheme to the Planning Committee. Furthermore, a request from local councillors for the application to be presented to Planning Committee has been received from Councillor Richard Robertson and Councillor Mike Davey, objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:
- The application fails to protect existing public assets, including open spaces and leisure facilities

- Fails to enhance to the character of the area by developing buildings of a scale and massing that do not respond to context and reflect the predominantly residential nature of the area
- Fails to respond positively to its context and draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings to help create distinctive and high quality places
- Would not have a positive impact on the setting in terms of location on the site, height, scale and form, materials and detailing, ground floor activity, wider townscape and landscape impacts and available views;
- Fails to design external spaces, landscape, public realm, and boundary treatments as an integral part of the new development proposal and coordinated with adjacent sites and phases. Nor does it demonstrate that the design relates to the character and intended function of the spaces and surrounding buildings;
- It would be significantly taller than the surrounding built form and not fit within the existing landscape and townscape causing harm to the significance of surrounding heritage assets
- It would not ensure that the character or appearance of Cambridge, as a city of spires and towers emerging above the established tree line, remains dominant from relevant view points
- It would have an adverse impact on the Cambridge skyline
- have an adverse impact on neighbouring buildings and open spaces in terms of the overlooking and overshadowing, and would lead to inadequate sunlight and daylight within and around the proposal
- It would cause harm to the character of open space of environmental and recreational importance and loss of some of that open space
- It would involve the felling of two large trees and significant surgery to others on the site, trees which are of great amenity and other value, without demonstrable

public benefits accruing from the proposal which clearly outweigh the current and future amenity value of the trees.

2.7 The application was presented to the Design and Conservation Panel on 9th December 2020. The Panel's comments are attached to this report under Appendix 1 for reference. The Panel voted against the proposal, with 4 members voting for RED and two members voting AMBER.

2.8 The application is accompanied by the following supporting information:

1. Design and Access Statement
2. Arboricultural Impact Assessment/Tree Survey
3. Planning Statement
4. Existing and proposed plans
5. Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA)
6. Drainage Strategy
7. Pre- Planning Assessment
8. Ecological Appraisal
9. Statement of Community Involvement
10. Structural Survey
11. SUDS Drainage Strategy Report
12. Sustainability Statement
13. Transport Statement
14. Travel Plan
15. Utility/Ventilation Statement
16. Air Quality Assessment
17. Bat Survey Report
18. BREEAM Ecology Credit Report
19. Daylight and Sunlight Impact Assessment
20. Desk Study Report
21. Heritage Statement
22. Landscape Strategy
23. Noise Impact Assessment
24. Accommodation Needs Assessment
25. CASL Student Behaviour Policy 2020

2.9 Additional information was submitted on 1st March 2021 in relation to CSVPA's accommodation needs to justify the proposal against policy 46 and outlining more detail of CSVPA's

student behavioural policy. Given this additional information is limited in scope and was requested by officers, further public consultation has not been carried out and officers do not consider it unfairly prejudices any interested party.

- 3.0 The applicants have sought to make further changes to the plans and supporting documents to partially address technical issues arising from consultee responses, however, officers have advised that such changes do not deal with the substantive issues and given the level of re-consultation required, this would cause the Council unnecessary expense and create delay.

3.0 RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

Reference	Description	Outcome
12/5357/PREAPP	Proposed student accommodation building (unit numbers are to be determined).	Not Supported
14/1252/FUL	Change of use from the permitted use as a studio/cafe bar/multimedia education centre and community facility (sui generis) granted under planning permission 97/1020 to a Class D1 dance school/studio including limited alterations to the external envelope of the building.	Approved
14/5452/PREAPP	Proposed student accommodation (58 units) to sit alongside proposed dance school/studio including ground floor cafe.	Not Supported
15/5354/PREAPP	Proposed student accommodation (48No studio units) plus residential development (4No flats) to sit alongside proposed dance	Partly Supported

school / studio including ground floor cafe and to include car and cycle parking, refuse provision and hard and soft landscaping.

17/1312/CL2PD	Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness under section 192 for the proposed use of the building for general educational use falling within Use Class D1 (Non Residential Institutions) as defined by the Town and County Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).	Certificate Granted
19/5139/PREAPP	Proposed development for an extension to the existing building on the site comprising student accommodation (C2) (116 rooms in 14no. flats) over with four connected roof top pods, with associated car and cycle parking provision. The dance school facilities on site will not be removed and will continue to function as part of the wider extended building.	Not Supported

3.1 Pre application 15/5354/PREAPP, was undertaken in 2015 by a previous officer who is no longer working at the Council. The pre application response was mostly positive and supported the scheme which proposed a raised building comprising two storeys in height with roof top pods. The applicant draws attention to this pre application response within their Design and Access Statement. Despite this positive response six years ago, the adoption of a new Local Plan has meant that the Council are required to assess the current proposal against these new and up to date policies, which are outlined within this report.

4.0 PUBLICITY

4.1 Advertisement:	Yes
Adjoining Owners:	Yes
Site Notices Displayed:	Yes

5.0 POLICY

5.1 Cambridge Local Plan 2018

PLAN	POLICY NUMBER
Cambridge Local Plan 2018	1, 3, 14, 23 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 46, 51 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 67, 68 (Appendix I), 70, 71, 80, 81, 82

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

Central Government Guidance	National Planning Policy Framework 2019 National Planning Policy Framework – Planning Practice Guidance from 3 March 2014 onwards Circular 11/95 (Annex A)
Supplementary Planning Documents	Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction (Jan 2020) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP): Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (February 2012)

	Eastern Gate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Material Considerations	<p><u>City Wide Guidance</u></p> <p>Arboricultural Strategy (2004)</p> <p>Cambridge and Milton Surface Water Management Plan (2011)</p> <p>Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2011 (Which recognises as a weakness in Petersfield at page 55, <i>'Limited amount of Protected Open Space, of which approximately two-thirds is publicly accessible. Although there is a range of publicly accessible open spaces close to the ward including Parker's Piece and Coldham's Common, the amount of informal open space in the ward is low given the local population density and natural and semi-natural green space is restricted to Mill Road Cemetery (CEM 06). There is no publicly accessible formal outdoor sports provision within Petersfield'</i></p> <p><i>And which recognises as an opportunity:</i></p> <p><i>'Improvements to St. Matthew's Piece dependent on the future of the Howard Mallett Centre. Site 5.09 Travis Perkins is allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006 for housing. If these sites were to come forward for their allocated use, the quality and quantity of open space made available on site should be high in line with the Council's standards in order to avoid further</i></p>

	<p><i>negative impact on any deficiencies in publicly accessible open space in Petersfield.)</i></p> <p>Mill Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2011</p> <p>Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (November 2010)</p> <p>Cambridge City Council Waste and Recycling Guide: For Developers.</p> <p>Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments (2010)</p> <p>Planning Obligations Strategy 2010</p>
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6.0 CONSULTATIONS

Urban Design Officer

6.1 Objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The scheme proposes a significant uplift in scale over the heights identified in the Eastern Gate SPD and fails to demonstrate that an increased height will fit coherently into the surrounding context.
- The combined scale, volume and box like massing of the proposed scheme will form an intrusive, overly dominant and bulky addition to the prevailing domestic scaled context, as well as outcompeting the Crown Court, looming over the established tree line, and diminishing the sense of green openness.

- Several functional design issues have been raised such as the quality of living accommodation and adequate cycle parking which are poorly resolved.

Taking the above into account, the proposed scheme does not comply with Policies 55, 56, 57 & 82 (CLP 2018) and is therefore not supported in Urban Design terms.

Conservation Officer

6.2 Objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The proposal is for a building with scale and extent that would block views and light through the trees thus changing the character of the space here as seen from Sturton Street, New Street and York Street, in a way that the existing single storey building does not.
- It would also reduce the openness of the space by adding the additional building (and with openness an awkward relationship with the St Matthews Centre building).
- From New Street, the openness below the canopy of the trees would also be affected by the proposed brick undercroft block at ground level. This and any other ground level service enclosures (a plant room?) would detract from claims that the design of the building mitigates any impact on the openness of the space.
- Bare trees together with any removal of existing trees together with being lit-up would emphasise the incongruous presence of the building.
- The building would stand within the conservation area but the design does not acknowledge this in terms of form or materials - for instance, in the use of the proposed corrugated cladding, green zinc, and steel balustrades in a conservation area where gault brick and slate predominate.

St Matthews Piece is significant within the Conservation area and it is considered that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

Within the broad category “less than substantial harm”, the level of the harm is considered to be significant, Paragraph 196 of the NPPF would apply here.

Tree Officer

6.3 Objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The removal of two trees along New Street and the anticipated damage upon more trees will severely hinder their growth.
- The new building will significant decrease light levels making the trees appear more oppressive.
- For the most part the new building is located outside the RPA of retained trees, however given the footprint and height of the building, space required for construction and infrastructure will be substantial and is expected to conflict with retained trees necessitating additional tree works.
- The size and height of the building will significantly alter the light levels within the site reducing direct sunlight to trees for longer periods. Trees will have to adapt to reduced light levels and changes in temperature, influenced by the new building.

For the above reasons, the layout is not supported and is contrary to policy 71 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

Landscape Officer

6.4 Objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- These trees form a special and locally distinct element in the street and their removal would alter the continuity of the treed frontage of the square which becomes quite evident in

Technical Visualisation viewpoint 1 and 2 where the building looms over a small utility building at ground level and the removal of the trees opens the view to a somewhat cluttered panorama of buildings, columns, parking, stairwells and elevator cores.

- Staircases into the Public Open Space (POS) which descend from the first floor of the building. The bulk of the overhead building also looms against the edge of the POS, impacting the character of the space. Whilst there is scope in the policy to give schools and other learning institutions leeway in developing on POS land, it is considered that the staircases are not 'required' to descend in this manner. Therefore, this intrusion and impact into the POS is unacceptable.
- Existing cycle parking has been shown to be retained around the perimeter of the dance school between the car park and the building, angled to the wall as well as some sheds to the rear of the building. These spaces are poorly overlooked and inconvenient in some respects. A scheme which has considered cycle parking differently and as a part of the proposal rather than an afterthought would be have been more welcome.
- More importantly, the cycle parking stands on the roof are wholly unacceptable. The scheme is being developed for 16-18 year old students and access to the roof is through two elevator cores with small waiting areas and a single leaf door with a turn for access. The students will ultimately find it more convenient to keep their bikes in their rooms after doing this manoeuvre or lock them to the fencing around the site.
- The landscape design depends heavily on grasses, perennials and meadow-like gardens. Whilst this is an attractive feature during the summer months, they tend to look poorly and rough in the wet winter months. The Strategy does not go into a great deal of detail but proposes nothing particularly controversial and

avoids making any wholesale changes to existing hard and soft landscape spaces, seeking to retain most of the parking areas and paths already present on site. As a setting for such a uniquely styled building, this seems rather mild and could have gone farther to create a setting for it.

In summary, the Landscape Officer does not support the application due to non-compliance with Local Plan Policies 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 67, 71, and 82 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

Sustainability Officer

6.5 No objections subject to conditions/informatives regarding the following:

- BRE issued Design Stage Certificate being submitted to the LPA
- BRE issued post Construction Certificate being submitted to the LPA
- A water efficiency specification, based on the Water Efficiency Calculator Methodology or the Fitting Approach set out in Part G of the Building Regulations 2010 (2015 edition) has been submitted to LPA

Crime Prevention Officer

6.6 Supports the proposal subject to conditions regarding the following:

- CCTV coverage locations
- External lighting
- Security management

Ecology Officer

6.7 Supports the proposal subject to conditions regarding the following:

- Specifications of ecological enhancement features

- Compliance conditions to secure recommendations within the submitted Ecological Appraisal.

Environmental Health

6.8 Unable to provide comments due to the lack of information regarding the following:

- Full details of the circumstances within which the acoustic assessment was carried out (e.g. no mention is made as to whether or not the dance studios were in use at the time of the assessment nor have details been provided of the noise from existing rooftop plant serving the cafe and the dance studios – significance of potential impacts of all of these noise sources will be required.)
- Details on the significance of impacts in terms of noise with regards to the relocation of the existing rooftop plant
- Provision of calculations carried out to obtain the 16-hr and 8-hr LAeqs reported in the assessment
- Full details of the acoustic assessment referenced in Section 4.9 of the Cass Allen assessment (referred to simply as a “2017 survey”) and justification for use of the “short term” attended measurements over previous “long-term” unattended survey results.
- Details and consideration of all new plant associated with the application
- Confirmation of the type of cooking anticipated within the café and provision of details of extract system design, height and location
- Details of proposed hours of use of the café including consideration of hours of use of the external terrace seating area.
- Submission of Air Quality Assessment as referenced in the Planning Statement

Local Highway Authority

6.9 No objections subject to the following concerns being addressed and conditions:

- A clear plan showing exactly what works the applicant wishes to undertake within the adopted public highway

- The cycle parking spaces would need to be covered and placing proposed car parking in front of them significantly reduces their accessibility
- A Traffic Management Plan condition
- Time restriction on allowing construction vehicles with a gross weight in excess of 3.5 tonnes entering and exiting the site
- Visibility splays condition
- Construction and materials of the proposed access

Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Team

6.10 Objection due to the following:

- Accident records for the last 60 months should be provided
- The Transport Statement objectives are broadly agreed however mitigation methods of how the proposal would not result in any significant impact upon the safe and effective operation of the surrounding road network need to be addressed

Drainage Officer

6.11 Unable to comment on the application due to some of the information missing in respect of the submitted Drainage Report.

Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA)

6.12 Object to the proposal due to the following reasons:

- The proposed development is looking to discharge surface water to the foul sewer network (as it currently does). However, from the Anglian Water asset plans, it is evident that there are surface water sewers in the vicinity of the site. In line with the drainage hierarchy, surface water should be disposed to a surface water sewer ahead of a foul. Therefore, a connection should be proposed to the surface water sewer network and dialogue opened with Anglian Water to agree a connection.

- Hydraulic Calculations should be submitted with the application to demonstrate the performance of the proposed system during the 100%, 3.35 and 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) storm events, including a suitable allowance for climate change. The calculations should demonstrate the design of the surface water system will not surcharge during the 100% AEP storm and no water is outside the system during the 3.3% AEP storm. If there is any flooding expected during the 1% AEP storm, this should be managed on site without flooding any property internally, or increasing the flood risk to any external land or property.
- Chapter 9 of the submitted SuDS Drainage Strategy Report details the management and maintenance responsibilities of the site. It is detailed in this section that Thames Water are the water authority responsible for the maintenance of the Public Sewer. However, Anglian Water are the sewerage undertakers for this area. The report should be factually correct and therefore this should be amended to ensure the correct water authority is noted for the maintenance of the sewer assets.
- Informatives regarding green roof construction green roofs and pollution control

Environment Agency (EA)

6.13 No comments as the application falls under the Flood Risk Standard Advice (FRSA).

S106 Officer

6.14 No objections subject to the following:

- Given the scale of the proposed development on this site, and in line with the funding formula set out in Cambridge City Council's Planning Obligations Strategy 2010, a specific S106 contribution of J30,397.00 (plus indexation) is requested towards the provision and / or improvement to the indoor sports facilities at the Abbey Sports Centre and Gym.

- Given the scale of the proposed development on this site, and in line with the funding formula set out in Cambridge City Council's Planning Obligations Strategy 2010, it is proposed that the council requests J26,894.00 (plus indexation) is requested towards the provision and / or improvement to outdoor sports facilities at Coldham's Common.
- Based on the funding formula set out in the council's Planning Obligations Strategy 2010, it is proposed that the council requests J27,346.00 (plus indexation) for the provision of and / or improvement of access to the Informal Open Space at St Matthews Piece, Sturton Street, Cambridge.

Where additional on-site Informal Open Space is provided, this will be taken into consideration when the final off-site commuted sum is calculated.

- In line with the Planning Obligations Strategy 2010, Cambridge City Council does not seek S106 children's play contributions from planning applications relating to student accommodation.

Cadent Gas

6.15 No objections. It is noted that Plan Protection should be notified of any reason for refusal of the application.

6.16 Cambridge Past, Present and Future

Objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The proposed scale, height, form and use would impact upon the local character of the local area and Conservation Area
- The proposal is not in accordance with policies 23, 55, 57, 59, 60, 61, 67 and 71 of the Local Plan

No public benefits of the scheme would overcome the harm caused by the proposal in this instance

7.0 REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 There have been many objections received to this application, as outlined below:

Number of Neutral Representations: 1

Number of Objections: 323

Number in Support: 0

The table below summarises these representations by grouping the main topic of the representation received and the response given by the Council by referencing the relevant section of the report:

Representation	Response
Building is much taller than buildings on surrounding streets and does not accord with the Eastern Gate Development Framework SPD	Addressed under paragraphs 8.20-8.29.
The design and scale of the building is not appropriate in this location and would dominate the surrounding area/buildings	Addressed under paragraphs 8.20-8.29.
The building is out of keeping with the local area, Conservation Area and the surrounding public realm and there is no justification within the Heritage Statement for this. Therefore, the proposal breaches policies 14, 23, 46, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60 and 61	Addressed under paragraphs 8.30-8.39. Policy 60 is referred to in paragraph 8.56
Overshadowing/overbearing impacts	Addressed under paragraphs 8.57 and 8.58
Impact upon trees and therefore the proposal is contrary to policy 71 of the local plan	Addressed under paragraphs 8.40-8.44
Loss of open green space for residents to enjoy and relax and what is being proposed to overcome this loss?	Addressed under paragraphs 8.45-8.55
The need for this amount of student accommodation on this	Addressed under paragraphs 8.4-8.12 and 9.5

site is unjustified – especially in respect of the pandemic and Brexit	
Impact upon local wildlife	Addressed under paragraph 8.92
Increased parking competition on surrounding streets	Addressed under paragraphs 8.77
Increased noise levels/disturbance	Addressed under paragraphs 8.60-8.69
Street safety for pedestrians	Addressed under paragraphs 8.72-8.76
The control of this large number of students in respect of antisocial behaviour is a concern, especially as St Matthews Piece is used by families with young children	Addressed under paragraphs 8.17 and 8.19
There is little evidence for new student accommodation in the east part of Cambridge and therefore this proposal should not be supported	Addressed under paragraph 9.6
The proposed caf� would benefit both students and local residents however, there is a concern that the caf� use could be changed to a student bar which would result in increased noise levels	Addressed under paragraph 9.7
The development is not in accordance with BREEAM standards	Addressed under paragraphs 8.93 – 8.98
The proposed cycle parking is totally unsuitable	Addressed under paragraphs 8.78-8.83
Fire safety is a concern for a building of this height	Addressed under paragraph 9.8
There is a discrepancy in regard to the plotting of the western boundary of the eastern strip of Protected Open Space	Addressed under paragraph 8.51

8.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 8.1 Policy 3 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) seeks to ensure that the majority of new development should be focused in and around the existing urban area, making the most effective use of previously developed land, and enabling the maximum number of people to access services and facilities locally. Given that the site is located within a sustainable location, is in walking and cycling distance of Cambridge City Centre, close to other CSVPA / CATS educational facilities and is in essence seeking to provide a combined place of education (existing CSVPA dance studios) and habitation for CSVPA students, the location of the application site for student accommodation is suitable.
- 8.2 Policy 14 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) identifies areas of major change and opportunity areas to for development, subject to a number of core principles. Although this policy is primarily aimed at more major infrastructure, its principles are nonetheless still engaged and should be aspired to. Many of the considerations under this policy refer to other policies within the local plan and these considerations will be discussed under the relevant sections in this report.
- 8.3 The site is situated within the Eastern Gate Opportunity Area, as set out under Policy 23 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018). Including other criteria, the policy seeks for development proposals within the Eastern Gate to be of a scale and massing that respond to context and reflect the predominantly residential nature of the area with reference to appropriate building heights suggested in accompanying figure 3.9. The Eastern Gate Area Development Framework SPD is referenced within the policy and forms a material consideration having informed the wording and criteria set out in Policy 23. The overall scale of the proposal would not be in accordance with either policies 14 or 23 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) or the Eastern Gate SPD provisions. Clear harm arises from the proposed scale and this harm is set out in subsequent paragraphs to this report.

The Need for Student Accommodation

- 8.4 The application proposes to redevelop the site to provide 113 student rooms. The accommodation would be for CSVPA

students. The School occupies the St Matthew's Centre and teaches approximately 150 of its 430 students on the site. Policy 46 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) supports new student accommodation provided it meets the identified needs of an existing educational institution within the city of Cambridge in providing housing for students attending a full-time course of one academic year or more. There are several criteria outlined within this policy for which proposals must accord.

- 8.5 The Planning Statement submitted outlines that the accommodation is for 16-18 year old students attending CSVPA on full time courses. CSVPA have confirmed their support for the proposal and are in the process of agreeing a formal arrangement with the applicant. This is illustrated within the letter attached to the Planning Statement under Appendix 1 and could form part of a S106 agreement/ planning condition requirement as necessary.
- 8.6 Criterion a) of Policy 46 requires applications for student accommodation to provide sufficient information to demonstrate there is a proven need for student accommodation to serve the institution. Although the Planning Statement identifies the need for student accommodation to be provided across Cambridge in an attempt to release more housing, there is little evidence provided within the application which demonstrates a specific need for new student accommodation to serve CSVPA on this site.
- 8.7 The release of general market housing is a possible outcome from a purpose built student housing proposal. However, the application does not identify the specific impact of CSVPA's continued growth on general market housing in the absence of the new accommodation or seek to quantify any benefit through the release of market housing through provision of the new accommodation. It is thus difficult to attach any significant benefit arising from the proposal in this regard.
- 8.8 It is acknowledged that the institution wishes to grow and attract more full time students and promote careers within the music and performing arts industry, however, the application fails to fully demonstrate / analyse that need for example through a business plan, evidence of increasing student applications to CSVPA, or by analysing availability of pre-existing student accommodation which could be occupied by CSVPA students

within the City which could cater for the anticipated uplift in need (see paragraph 6.14 of Policy 46).

8.9 Further information as part of an Accommodation Needs Assessment was submitted in February 2021. In a standard year, the applicants state that there are 150 Higher Education students and 300 Further Education students at the School. CSVPA has aspirations to increase student numbers to 600 over the next 5-10-year period (an increase of 150 students) and they state that there is no scope for additional student accommodation to be created at CSVPA's existing premises. The School's strong preference is for all its students to be located within purpose-built accommodation run and managed by the School and close to the teaching facilities. The Needs Assessment sets out that *'Whilst the School would prefer for all its students to be on site, the scale of the proposed growth does not entirely allow for that to happen. The aspiration therefore is to seek to house all those between the ages of 16-18 years onsite, while older students are at other accommodation in the City.'*

8.10 CSVPA state that they currently provide a total of 407 rooms for under 18s and over 18s as per the table below and that all of the accommodation below is fully utilised and does not have the opportunity to expand.

NAME	LOCATION	NO ROOMS
Under 18s		
Varsity House	New Street	298
Over 18s		
Masters House	Histon Road	80
Batim House	East Road	29

8.11 Notwithstanding the above, there is no information on the number of 16-18 year old students applying to CSVPA to give

officers confidence that additional accommodation of this scale is required on this site. The further Needs Assessment mainly reiterates the same information contained within the Planning Statement and does not provide a satisfactory evidence base. Supply for the provision of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) as set out in the Local Plan has been significant. Whilst it is desirable for CSVPA to own and directly manage its own property for its own students, this is not a requirement of the policy and the Council would not want pre-existing PBSA to stand empty and be under-utilised, particularly as space standards for such accommodation are generally well below the adopted Non-Technical Housing Standards 2015 and would be unsuitable for alternative C3 use without major modification.

- 8.12 Therefore, the application fails to demonstrate a need for the proposed student accommodation to serve CSVPA in light of existing purpose built student accommodation within the City of Cambridge and is not in accordance with Policy 46 (a) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Other Policy 46 Matters

- 8.13 There is no existing residential development on the site and the site is not allocated for residential development. Therefore, the proposal would not result in the loss of any affordable and/or market housing and is in accordance with Policy 46 (b) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).
- 8.14 The proposed accommodation would be located directly above the St Matthews Centre which is used by CSVPA for teaching and is therefore a sustainable location for combining teaching and living accommodation. The site is also in close proximity to other higher educational institutions within the city and being centrally located is not out of cycle or walking range of CATS on Round Church Street. It is therefore in a sustainable and accessible location and it is appropriately located for access to and from the institution, in accordance with Policy 46 (c) and (d) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).
- 8.15 The proposal would not provide any dedicated parking for students. The only exception to this is the provision of a designated disabled parking space. This parking strategy is considered appropriate as there are excellent opportunities for

non-car travel at the site, with good access to public transport, walking and cycling routes. The applicants state that there would be a strict prohibition against the keeping of cars in the city by students and this would be a condition within the student's contracts. Given the age profile of students (between the ages of 16-18 years old), as well as the accommodation being directly above the teaching facility, both would further reduce the likelihood of car ownership. These matters could be controlled through S106 provisions or planning condition if necessary. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy 46 (e) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

- 8.16 The proposal seeks to provide 113 student rooms separated into 14 cluster flats. There are no minimum room size standards for student accommodation. Each room would benefit from an en-suite and have desk space to study, as well as have access to a shared communal space. Although the rooms would not benefit from any private balcony space, officers consider the internal spaces are reasonable in size to provide sufficient amenity for future students (typically only residing for a temporary period) and therefore consider the proposal is in accordance with Policy 46 (f) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Amenity and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 8.17 Given the large number of students between 16-18 years old for which the proposal would cater for, antisocial behaviour and disruption to nearby residents and users of the adjacent St Matthew's Piece are a concern and are reflected in third party representations. The applicant has briefly outlined that security measures will be put in place to prevent any antisocial behaviour under section 7.6 of the Design and Access Statement. This only summarises the security methods which are intended to be implemented and does not sufficiently explain how these methods are to be successfully implemented in preventing any antisocial behaviour or prevent any unauthorised access on this site. The Crime Prevention Officer has been consulted on the application and has recommended approval, subject to conditions to secure details regarding CCTV coverage, lighting, and robust security rated doors. If officers were minded to support the proposal, these details would be recommended.

- 8.18 Notwithstanding the above, given the large number of students anticipated to congregate on the site and within the local area, the applicant has been invited to submit further information on how the behaviour of students will be controlled to prevent any antisocial behaviour and subsequent disturbance upon residents. The applicant has submitted the Student Behaviour Policy (dated June 2020), which outlines the disciplinary process for controlling student behaviour. These measures include rewards for good behaviour and subsequent consequences for inappropriate behaviour. These measures are standard practice which are implemented across all student accommodation sites managed by CATS Cambridge and does not present mitigation measures to control student behaviour on this particular site. St Matthews Piece is a well-used area by all age groups and is a sensitive site. Given the intensification and overall scale of the proposal together with the lack of meaningful external landscaped space for students within the site itself, officers are not satisfied that sufficient mitigation measures to control or limit anti-social behaviour have been provided and therefore the proposal is not in accordance with Policy 46 (g) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).
- 8.19 Overall, due to the lack of sufficient information demonstrating the need for student accommodation and the implementation of satisfactory measures to prevent antisocial behaviour of students on the site, the proposal fails to accord with Policy 46 (a) and (g) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and is not supported in principle.

Context of Site, Design and Visual Impact

- 8.20 The application site is located at the St Matthews Centre, directly adjacent to St Matthews Piece. The site comprises a single storey building (with mezzanine levels) occupied by CSVPA. There is on site car parking and cycle parking which is situated to the front and partly to the rear, with access onto New Street. The prevailing character of the area is predominantly two storey terraced residential dwellings surrounding the site.
- 8.21 The proposed building would comprise three main storeys in height with the addition of roof top pods as a limited fourth floor and would be supported by timber stilts so that the building would partly sit above and extend outwards from the existing St Matthews Centre building. This approach adopts the 'Knock

Nothing Down' concept which was originally formulated by Prof. Will Alsop which aspires to retain existing buildings on sites to combine old and new development. The proposed building would measure approximately 20m in height from ground level, 21m in width and 55m in depth.

- 8.22 The Eastern Gate Development Framework SPD identifies that the application site could allow for an overall building height of up to 2+1 storeys. The +1 refers to a third floor of accommodation in the roofscape or a setback upper floor. This translates to a recommended shoulder height of approximately 7m and overall building height of approximately 10m. The proposed building would have a shoulder height of approximately 16.5m and an overall building height of approximately 20m. Assuming a minimum floor to floor height of 4m at ground level and 3m at upper levels, as noted in paragraph 3.4.4-6, pg.42 of the SPD, the proposed building has an equivalent height of a 5+1 storey building. This is significantly above the maximum height recommended within the SPD.
- 8.23 The applicant has submitted a Townscape & Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA), which concludes that any adverse townscape effects are justified by the potential for the building to become a 'distinctive landmark'. Notwithstanding this, the site does not occupy a prominent location, is not located on a significant route, nor is the proposed use itself an important civic function to warrant an elevated townscape status. By virtue of its location and use, the proposal does not require a significantly scaled 'landmark' building, and therefore officers consider there is no basis for the significant increase in height over what is shown in the Eastern Gate Development Framework SPD in this instance.
- 8.24 The technical visualisations contained within Appendix 6 of the TVIA demonstrate that the proposed uplift in scale will create a building that does not fit coherently within the surrounding townscape. By virtue of its excessive scale, height, bulk and massing, the proposed building is not considered to be in keeping with the prevailing character of the local area which is predominantly two storey terraced dwellings. The continuous 'box like' form of the building would engulf the neighbouring development and would be incongruous and visually intrusive along the frontage of New Street, which is clearly demonstrated

within Appendix 6 of the TVIA. Whilst the proposal aims to engage with the New Street frontage by bringing the proposed building forward on the site, there are significant concerns that the excessive scale of the building would ultimately result in an unsympathetic form of development which would be excessively prominent within the street scene.

- 8.25 Furthermore, Appendix 5 (viewpoint 4) demonstrates the visual impact of the building upon York Street, to the east of the site. The proposal would clearly erode the existing openness of the site and would dominate street scene views within the immediate area. Again, the excessive scale is clearly demonstrated which is inappropriate within this location.
- 8.26 Moreover, the facades of the building would be constructed of steel cladding to which terracotta baguette battens would be fixed to, in an irregular arrangement to resemble a 'nest like' form of development in amongst the existing trees. The staircases situated on the eastern facade would comprise a green powder coated aluminum which allow access to the zinc pigment green rooftop pods. In addition, a new reception building is proposed to the front of the site, adjacent to the access via New Street, which will comprise a Cambridge buff brick material.
- 8.27 The irregular arrangement of terracotta baguette battens does not mitigate the visual harm of the building as identified above. The battens would constitute the appearance of an overly engineered design and would not appear as a 'nest like' form of development. This design approach would exacerbate the concerns raised in regard to its overall scale and would cumulatively contribute to creating a harmful form of development within this location.
- 8.28 The use of the building requires a level of security and surveillance such as a staffed 'porters lodge' or equivalent at the building entrance. The location and layout of the proposed reception building does not provide this use at present as it is separate from the building entrances and visitors will not pass through it upon entrance. A pavilion that sits within the site between the lift or stair cores would better serve this purpose and reduce the clutter to the front of the site. Furthermore, the appearance of this space needs to be part of a 'family of buildings' or a well-conceived building itself. The choice of the

buff brick material and facade detailing is nondescript, and the resulting structure appears out of place. These concerns have also been raised by the Design and Conservation Panel (see Appendix 1).

- 8.29 Overall, by virtue of its excessive scale, height, mass, bulk, depth and unsympathetic design, the proposal would result in a visually intrusive, overly dominant and incongruous form of development which would be out of keeping with the prevailing character of the local area and as such, is not in accordance with policies 23, 55, 56, 57 or 58 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), as well as the guidance set out within the Eastern Gate SPD.

Impact upon the Conservation Area

- 8.30 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. The application site is located within the northern tip of the designated Mill Road Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is a well-preserved Victorian suburb of Cambridge comprising a grid pattern of streets, stretching off at right angles from Mill Road. The main characteristic of the Conservation Area is the dominance of two storey terraced housing which create long lines of buildings lying directly at the back of the pavement.
- 8.31 St Matthews Piece and the site on which the proposed building would stand is an important focus at this point of the Conservation Area. By virtue of its openness, it provides a long-established gap and transition at this edge of the Conservation Area between different characters and periods of development. Effectively, the boundary here is tree-lined (the buildings on New Street and the east side of York Street being outside the Conservation Area boundary) along the edge of the open space. The St Matthews Centre building is single storey in appearance and lies well below the tree canopy, allowing the trees to dominate the space and in terms of people's experience of the space and the surrounding streets, allows views and light through and beneath them to contribute to the character of the space.

- 8.32 The trees which are located around the perimeter of the application site and St Matthews Piece have statutory protection through the designation of the Conservation Area. These trees have been in this position for many years and significantly contribute to the visual amenity of the Conservation Area. The visual intrusiveness of the proposed building would be intensified during the winter months when these trees are no longer in leaf. Bare trees along with the removal of two trees along New Street would make the building more prominent within this setting and would significantly alter the open character of the Conservation Area in this instance.
- 8.33 By virtue of its excessive scale, height, bulk and massing, the proposed building would visually intrude upon the openness of St Matthews Piece, block views and light through the trees and spaces and thus change the character of the open space and relationship of built form to this as seen from Sturton Street, New Street and York Street, in a way that the existing single storey building does not. The building would loom over the existing single storey building and would intrude into views into and out of St Matthews Piece, which is an important feature of the Conservation Area. In addition, the proposed reception building would further intrude upon the openness below the tree canopy and would overall significantly disrupt the open character of this part of the Conservation Area. These concerns are reflected in the comments raised by the Design and Conservation Panel. A number of trees would also be lost and put at further risk as a result of the proposal (see below paragraphs).
- 8.34 The Conservation Area is predominantly characterised by built form comprising gault brick and slate roofs. The proposed materials of terracotta, steel cladding, green zinc and green aluminium are dissimilar to these materials and would cumulatively intrude upon the character and visual appeal of the Conservation Area in this instance.
- 8.35 With reference to the NPPF and the impact on the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 201 advises that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph

196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the asset affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

- 8.36 St Matthew's Piece is of considerable significance to the Mill Road Conservation Area as a whole. The proposal would not result in complete loss of the space but its partial occupation by the proposed building would have a significant impact on the perception of the openness and character of the space from streets alongside. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application identifies the importance of the Conservation Area, however, it overlooks the contribution of St Matthews Piece to the character of the Conservation Area. Representations have been received which claim the Heritage Statement undermines the benefits and importance of St Matthews Piece and overlooks the significance of this asset. Officers conclude that the applicants have failed to justify a building of this scale and design in this location and therefore cannot support the proposal.
- 8.37 Within the broad category "less than substantial harm", the level of the harm is considered to be at the higher end of the less than substantial scale. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that '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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'" In weighing this balance, and as paragraph 193 of the NPPF states, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.
- 8.38 Given that St Matthews Piece is an important asset and its significance within Mill Road Conservation Area is very high, officers consider that in balancing the harm against the public benefits of the scheme, significant weight should be given to the protection of St Matthews Piece. Despite this, the applicant's Heritage Statement identifies the level of harm to be minor/moderate upon the Conservation Area and as such, no public benefits have been put forward by the applicant to outweigh the level of harm identified by officers.

8.39 Overall, by virtue of the excessive height, scale, bulk, mass and unsympathetic materials and design including the loss of trees, the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Mill Road Conservation Area which is not outweighed by public benefit arising from the scheme. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), NPPF 2019 paragraphs 193 and 196 and the provisions of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Trees

8.40 There are a number of trees which surround the site and St Matthews Piece, all of which have statutory protection through the Conservation Area and designated Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These trees are a dominant feature within this location and significantly contribute to the amenity of the local area.

8.41 The proposal would result in the removal of two of these trees along the front of the site, either side of the existing access, adjacent to New Street. This is to accommodate the front elevation of the proposed building, which would align with New Street. The loss of these trees along the New Street frontage will lessen the verdant impact trees make to the character and appearance of the area and the value of the visual buffer separating the site. Given the large scale of the proposal, it is anticipated that the adjacent trees either side of the two trees to be removed would also need to be removed as the trees' capacity to grow would be significantly hindered. These trees are considered to be a significant asset to the character of the local area and therefore the removal of these trees, as well as the anticipated harm upon the growth of neighbouring trees is not acceptable in this instance.

8.42 The majority of the proposed building would be located outside the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of the retained trees, however given the excessive footprint and height of the building, space required for construction and infrastructure will be substantial and is expected to conflict with retained trees necessitating additional tree works. No information has been provided on how the building would be constructed whilst mitigating any impact upon the trees and this is a concern.

- 8.43 Changes in habitat can have a serious impact on the long-term health of trees, especially when these changes are rapid, and trees do not have an opportunity to adapt. The overall scale and height of the building will significantly alter the light levels within the site, reducing direct sunlight to the trees for longer periods, relying on trees having to adapt to reduced light levels and changes in temperature, which would ultimately result in significant harm upon their growth.
- 8.44 Overall, the scale and height of the proposed building is deemed to be excessive and would not respect the existing trees which significantly contribute to the visual amenity of the site and local area. The removal of two trees along the New Street frontage, as well as the anticipated harm brought upon the surrounding trees would result in significant harm upon these trees and therefore the proposal is not in accordance with policy 71 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Protected Open Space

- 8.45 The site is set adjacent to and within an area of Protected Open Space (POS), which lies directly to the south and extends along and within the eastern boundary of the application site. The POS strip which runs along the eastern boundary is privately owned and is currently occupied with car parking spaces, footpaths and is partially grassed. The open space to the south is relatively open and is well used by residents for recreational use which includes a play area for families of young children.
- 8.46 St Matthews Piece is one of very few areas of open space within the Petersfield ward and therefore plays a pivotal role in providing green space for residents to enjoy. The Open Space and Recreation Strategy dated October 2011 confirms that Petersfield Ward comprises a limited amount of POS compared to the relatively high population of the area. Furthermore, it is considered that St Matthews Piece is classified as having both environmental and recreational value, as assessed under Appendix I of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018). Therefore, this area of POS is considered to provide a high level of amenity value for residents and retaining its existing amenity for users, including its sense of openness, is therefore of importance.

- 8.47 The proposal gives rise to two main impacts on the POS. Impact to the eastern private area of POS and impact to the southern public POS.
- 8.48 The proposed staircases on the eastern elevation would dramatically descend into the POS, eroding the sense of openness of the remaining land. Although policy 67 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) allows institutions to develop within POS land, it is considered that the staircases are not 'required' to descend in this manner and there appears to be no justification for their location. The staircases would erode the sense of openness and inappropriately intrude upon this part of the private POS in an unacceptable manner and would further reduce the ability of this space to provide any form of meaningful informal open space for future students to enjoy.
- 8.49 The application does propose a new footpath linking New Street to the area of POS to the rear of the site, albeit this appears to stop at the café terrace at the rear of the building. This would be used by both students and residents and is intended to increase access through the site. Despite this, given the overall scale and intensification of the proposed use, officers consider this feature does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character of the open space and the subsequent impact upon its environmental and recreational value.
- 8.50 The second main impact on the POS is to the south and officers are of the view that due to the scale and proximity of the proposal, it would undoubtedly dominate and detract from users' experience of the public element of the park. The proposed terraced cafe would provide minimal compensation for existing users, whose enjoyment of the nearest parts of the park to the site – particularly the play area - are already partially impinged upon by the existing building itself. The impact of the proposed built form and its proximity would be a clear and significant erosion of the environmental character and quality of St Matthews Piece. Given the significance of the POS locally, this forms a reason for refusal together with the easterly impact as noted above.

Other Open Space Matters

- 8.51 There is a concern raised amongst the representations received regarding the extent of the western boundary of the strip of

designated private POS . It questions the accuracy of the western boundary of this strip of POS, as depicted in the applicant's Design and Access Statement, Part 1, page 17. This discrepancy has been ongoing for a number of years and the representation is seeking clarification from the applicant as to how the western boundary was formalised. Officers have raised this query with the agent however no response was received.

The Overall Harm

- 8.52 The overall scale, height and position of the building and associated access structures would dominate and enclose the public Protected Open Space of St Matthews Piece, significantly reducing its sense of openness and harming its environmental quality. It would also inappropriately intrude upon the private Protected Open Space to the east of the building, enclosing and reducing its ability to provide any form of meaningful informal open space provision for future students to enjoy. The proposal would ultimately detract from the character of the Protected Open Space and its environmental and recreational values and be contrary to policy 67 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Landscaping

- 8.53 The Landscape Officer advises that the proposed landscaping depends heavily on grasses, perennials and meadow-like gardens and would be an attractive feature during the summer months, but look poorly and rough in the wet winter months. The Landscaping Strategy does not go into a great level of detail but proposes nothing particularly controversial and avoids making any wholesale changes to existing hard and soft landscape spaces, seeking to retain most of the parking areas and paths already present on site.
- 8.54 The advice is disappointing, and officers note that Policy 68 and accompanying Appendix I of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) state that all residential development should contribute to the provision of open space and recreation sites/facilities on site. The type and size of open space provided will be dependent on the existing open space provided within the area. As previously discussed under paragraph 8.46, the Open Space and Recreation Strategy dated October 2011 confirms that Petersfield Ward comprises a limited amount of POS and that

St Matthews Piece is readily used by residents and is an important feature to be retained. It is noted that the S106 Officer has requested the applicant to provide open space through a S106 agreement however, policy 68 clearly states that the provision of on-site open space should be delivered without relying on funding through a S106 agreement. Given the large number of students who will be congregating within St Matthews Piece and the immediate area, officers consider the proposal does not provide sufficient justification for the lack of open space provided to outweigh the loss in this instance and is therefore not acceptable. Conditions could be imposed to secure further landscaping details but in the first instance, there is a lack of justification to demonstrate that an acceptable amount and design of open space can be delivered as part of the proposal to reflect future student needs.

- 8.55 Overall, the proposal does not contribute any provision of open space and there is a lack of justification to demonstrate that an acceptable amount and design of open space can be delivered as part of the proposal to reflect the intensification of the proposed use and associated student needs. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy 68 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Wider Visual Impact and Height

- 8.56 A Visual Impact Assessment has been submitted by the applicant. It models views of the site from various vantage points across Cambridge in order to understand whether there is a wider visual impact on the setting of the City. The Landscape Officer concludes that although the applicants have not undertaken an assessment from Castle Mound, the proposal is broadly in accordance with policy 60 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and is not considered to result in any intrusion upon the skyline of Cambridge to warrant a refusal on these grounds. Comments have been raised amongst third party representations declaring the proposal would be in breach of policy 60 however, given the building would not comprise a height to be seen in any significant viewpoints across Cambridge, officers consider the proposal would not result in significant visual intrusion upon the skyline of Cambridge in this instance and is therefore not a reason for refusal.

Residential Amenity

Neighbouring Properties

- 8.57 The site is surrounded by rows of terraced properties, of which most directly face onto St Matthews Piece. Notwithstanding the overall scale and height of the building, the proposal would be positioned at a reasonable distance away from these neighbouring properties to not result in any significantly harmful overbearing impacts.
- 8.58 The applicant has submitted a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment which has assessed the overshadowing impact upon the surrounding properties. There is no existing specific National Planning Policy guidance relating to daylight and sunlight impacts from proposed development, however, the BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice is the national standard tool for which developers use to assess daylight sunlight impacts of proposed development. The assessment has undertaken standard methods for assessing any potential loss of daylight and sunlight to windows of the surrounding properties, by calculating the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) for daylight and Annual Probable Sunlight Hours and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours for sunlight. The VSC and Annual Probable Sunlight Hours and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours calculations show that the daylight and sunlight levels reaching these properties are BRE PASS level which is acceptable. Therefore, no significant loss of light or overshadowing impacts are considered to occur in this instance.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

- 8.59 In order to assess the daylight levels within the proposed building, Average Daylight Factor (ADF) values have been calculated for each of the different types of rooms within the building, including kitchens, bedrooms and communal rooms. These values have been assessed against the standard ADF Target Value for each of these rooms. Comments have been raised in respect of insufficient light levels within the communal rooms and bedrooms. In accordance with the BRE guidance, each of these rooms has been calculated to have a sufficient ADF value which would exceed the ADF Target Value for each

of the different types of room. Therefore, officers consider that each room will receive sufficient light levels and is acceptable.

Noise/Wider Area Impacts

- 8.60 The Environmental Health Officer has been consulted on the application and has raised several concerns with the proposal in respect of insufficient information being provided. Given the intensification of the proposed use, the applicant has failed to fully demonstrate the impacts of such a use within an area which comprises several existing noise sensitive receptors (NSR).
- 8.61 The applicant has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment which confirms that all bedrooms will have openable windows. The assessment fails to consider any potential plant noise impacts (both existing and proposed) and noise impacts from use of the dance studios on future students. It is acknowledged that the accommodation will not be adjoined to the studios as it will be supported on stilts, and therefore potential flanking and structure borne noise is eliminated. However, the dance studio is a potential source of noise which needs to be given consideration to fully assess the noise impacts upon the future students. Furthermore, the consideration of the existing roof top plant which as per the Demolition Plan (Ref:D100), is to be relocated onto the lower part of the existing roof which will move it closer to existing NSRs on Sturton Street but also locate it immediately below first floor openable windows of the building which could result in additional noise and disturbance upon future students. These details are essential to fully assess the noise impacts of the proposal upon the amenity of future students.
- 8.62 The assessment refers to a previous survey undertaken in 2017 and it is unclear as to why short-term monitoring results are being considered as opposed to long term monitoring results, which have already been undertaken within the locality. In addition, no details have been provided on how the 8-hr and 16-hr LAegs have been obtained from the short-term monitoring

results and how they compare with the long term monitoring LAeqs. This approach needs to be explained to establish the validity of the short-term results presented under this application.

- 8.63 In officers' consideration these are technical matters which could be resolved through an exchange of correspondence and / or secured through condition. They do not amount to reasons for refusal. The applicants are in control of both elements of the teaching and living accommodation and is not in their interests to mismanage this.

Change of use from D1 Use to A3 Use (Cafe)

- 8.64 The proposal includes a change of use of part of the existing building from D1 to A3 use, incorporating a cafe and an outdoor terraced area. No information including proposed hours of opening or the scale and type of cooking to be provided on site has been submitted. The proposed development has the potential to impact upon the amenity of both onsite and offsite residential receptors through odour and operational noise, in particular any plant noise associated with the operation of the cafe and hours of use with consideration on the use of the external terrace.

- 8.65 The Ventilation Statement produced refers only to the student accommodation element of the application. No information is provided on the scale and types of cooking that will take place on site in association with the cafe use. Adequate ventilation/extraction systems must be provided in food and drink premises to remove steam, cooking odours and grease-laden air. In cases where cooking practices are minimal, natural ventilation may be sufficient. However, where cooking odours may potentially cause a nuisance to neighbours, an extract duct with a fan and filter is required to ventilate cooking fumes and remove those odours. Details are required on the range of food to be provided and method of cooking intended along with details of the proposed ventilation/extraction system

installed to meet all required standards. In the absence of this information, a full assessment of the proposed cafe use upon the amenities of future students and existing residents cannot be undertaken.

- 8.66 It is also noted that operational hours of the proposed cafe and the external terraced area have not been submitted, as well collection/deliveries to and from the cafe. Although these details have not been submitted, officers consider these details could be secured through conditions should the application be approved.

Lighting

- 8.67 Section 10 of the Landscape Strategy contains a lighting strategy to include a mix of up-lighted building columns, bollarded lighting and wall mounted lights. Given the close proximity of the residential properties surrounding St Matthews Piece, the external lighting adopted would need to be carefully chosen in order to mitigate any potential disturbance upon these neighbouring properties. Specifically, it is expected that the provision of an external / artificial lighting assessment is carried out in accordance with the Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations (contained within the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light - GN01/20 (or as superseded) for light intrusion into windows (demonstrating vertical lux levels at the nearest sensitive facades), luminaire Intensity and building luminance. These details have not been submitted with the application however should the application be approved these details could be secured by condition.

Plant Noise

- 8.68 It is acknowledged that the existing plant is to relocate on the existing roof which could result in noise disturbance upon neighbouring properties, as well as the future students. Noise levels from plant associated equipment requires an assessment to be undertaken in order to determine the level of noise

generated would not exceed that of existing background noise levels. No assessment has been submitted with the application regarding the potential noise impacts of relocating the existing rooftop plant nor has any detail been provided on the external mechanical plant associated with the proposed development.

- 8.69 These details could be secured by a condition should the application be approved however, given the quantity of the existing plant to be relocated, it is considered that the significance of noise impacts for this aspect prior to being able to determine whether it is an appropriate proposal to do so is required.

Accessible homes

- 8.70 The development has been assessed for compliance with Policy 51 in relation to all the new units. The Design and Access Statement states the development will comply with the requirements of Part M4 (2) of the Building Regulations and provides wheelchair user rooms. A condition shall be imposed upon any consent granted to secure this requirement and comply with policy 51.

Refuse Arrangements

- 8.71 The refuse area will be positioned directly behind the proposed reception building to the front of the site. The proposal is compliant with the RECAP guidance and is in accordance with policy 57 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Highway Safety

- 8.72 The Local Highway Authority has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections subject to conditions regarding a Traffic Management Plan, visibility splays and construction and materials adopted for the access. Should the application be approved, these conditions are reasonable and necessary to impose.
- 8.73 The Highway Authority have raised a concern regarding the lack of details in respect of the proposed modifications to the pedestrian and vehicular access points as there are no clear

indications marked on drawing number A0427 (GA) 100 Rev A, which is the plan referenced. This could be secured by a condition should the application be approved.

- 8.74 The Transport Team from the Cambridgeshire County Council have also been consulted on the application and they have raised an objection due to the lack of accident records for the last 60 months, as well as satisfactory mitigation measures. The applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan which conclude that the site is highly accessible via sustainable modes of transport and that the proposal intends to promote sustainable modes of transport. The Transport Team are in general agreement with both documents however require further information on the accident records for the last 60 months and any associated trends or clusters. This should cover East Road between its junction with Norfolk Street and Newmarket Road roundabout, and Newmarket Road between East Road roundabout and its junction with Coldhams Lane. The Transport Statement will need to pay particular attention to any collisions involving vulnerable road users. It would also be beneficial to tabulate the accidents to clearly define the number and severity of accidents occurring at each location.
- 8.75 The Transport Statement mentions that given the existing travel patterns of CSVPA students living in Varsity House it would be expected that most trips to and from the student accommodation would be made on foot or by cycle. The survey data shows that over 79% of students currently walk or cycle to the existing CSVPA site. The survey data indicates that 11% of the students drive to the site currently. It also outlines that the proposal would generate a number of trips of 24 two-way total person trips during the AM peak hour and 31 two-way movements during the PM peak.
- 8.76 Overall, the proposal is not considered to result in any significant impact upon the safe and effective operation of the surrounding road network and is in accordance with policy 81 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Car Parking

8.77 The applicant has undertaken a car park occupancy survey for the existing dance studio which concluded that the highest accumulation of cars parked was 11 vehicles. An additional 7 car parking spaces are proposed, of which 5 will be for disabled users. Given that the proposal does not seek to increase the vehicle movements when compared to the existing vehicle movements, the existing parking spaces would be sufficient to accommodate the car parking demand of the Dance Studio. This allocation of car parking is in accordance with the standards as set out under Appendix L of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and would not result in any parking overnight stress, in accordance with policy 82 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Cycle Parking

- 8.78 There is currently cycle parking for a total of 132 cycles on the site. The applicant has undertaken a cycle park occupancy survey for the existing dance studio which concluded that the highest number of cycles parked was 13. Given the proposal intends to provide additional cycle parking to serve the student accommodation, the existing cycle parking spaces would be sufficient to accommodate the dance studio.
- 8.79 The application proposes an additional 102 cycle parking spaces for the student accommodation which would equate to 2 spaces per every 3 bed space which is in accordance with the standards under Appendix L of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).
- 8.80 There are concerns raised regarding the accessibility of the proposed cycle parking. The Local Highway Authority have commented that the proposed car parking layout would prevent easy access to the proposed cycle parking to east of the building. This is due to the cycle parking being located directly adjacent to the proposed car parking areas, making it difficult for cyclists to easily access the cycle parking area. There is also a concern raised in respect of the lack of overhead cover the proposed cycle parking would have, although this detail could be secured via a condition should the application be approved.

- 8.81 Policy 82 in conjunction with the Council's Cycle Parking Guide 2010, encourages cycle parking to be secure, easily accessible and be of high quality. The accessibility of the cycle parking proposed to the east of the building appears to be restricted due to the proposed car parking immediately adjacent. The new footpath link running parallel to the eastern area of cycle parking is indicated as being solely for pedestrians as opposed to a multifunctional access route. There does not appear to be any other direct route for cyclists to access the cycle parking in this area however, the width of the proposed footpath would allow for both pedestrians and cyclists to use and is therefore acceptable.
- 8.82 Moreover, the cycle parking stands on the roof is an inappropriate location to provide easily accessible cycle parking. The Landscape Officer has raised a concern in this regard as the scheme is being developed for 16-18 year old students and access to the roof through two narrow elevator cores with small waiting areas and a single leaf door with a turn for access far from not ideal. The students will ultimately find it more convenient to keep their bikes in their rooms after doing this manoeuvre or lock them to the fencing around the site, as opposed to making use of the cycle parking on the roof. Therefore, officers consider this proposed cycle parking area lacks easy access and is entirely impractical.
- 8.83 Overall, the proposed location of the cycle parking on the roof is poor, inappropriate and is impracticable to access and would result in inadequate cycle parking within the site for students to access. The scheme therefore fails to promote high quality cycle parking and is contrary to the guidance under the Council's Cycle Parking Guidance 2010 and policy 82 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 8.84 The application has been assessed by the City Council Sustainable Drainage Engineer and no comments have been provided due to the lack of drainage information contained within the appendices of the Drainage Report submitted. Therefore, the Drainage Officer cannot accurately determine as to whether sufficient drainage mitigation methods are proposed.

- 8.85 Notwithstanding the above, Anglian Water have been consulted on the application and have raised no objections subject to informatives to ensure the applicant is aware of their responsibilities regarding surface water disposal which will need to be agreed with Anglia Water prior to the commencement of development. This informative shall be imposed, should the application be approved.
- 8.86 Moreover, the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) have been consulted on the application and have objected to the application. The proposed development is looking to discharge surface water to the foul sewer network (as it currently does), however, from the Anglian Water asset plans, it is evident that there are surface water sewers in the vicinity of the site. In line with the drainage hierarchy, surface water should be disposed to a surface water sewer ahead of a foul water sewer. Therefore, a connection should be proposed to the surface water sewer network and dialogue opened with Anglian Water to agree a connection. This will be covered by the suggested informative recommended by Anglian Water, should the application be approved.
- 8.87 The applicant has not submitted any hydraulic calculations demonstrating the performance of the proposed system during the 100%, 3.35 and 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) storm events, including a suitable allowance for climate change. Without these calculations, it is difficult to fully assess whether the proposal would satisfactorily manage any potential flooding of any internal property as well as any external ones within the locality. Given the site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk), officers are confident that the proposal would not result in any significant flood risk and is therefore acceptable in this instance.
- 8.88 The LLFA have raised a discrepancy in the submitted Drainage Report, in respect of which water authority is responsible for the maintenance of the public sewer. Thames Water are mentioned as being the water authority however Anglian Water have confirmed in their comments that they are the water authority and therefore officers consider this is to be a mistake made by the applicant and is not a reason for refusal in this instance.

- 8.89 The LLFA have also recommended informatives regarding green roofs and pollution control which would be attached to any consent granted, should the application be approved.
- 8.90 Lastly, the Environment Agency (EA) have been consulted on the application and no objections or comments have been raised as the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) and falls under the Flood Risk Standard Advice (FRSA).
- 8.91 Overall, whilst there are issues associated with the proposed drainage aspects of the scheme, the proposal could be made to be acceptable in terms of drainage mitigation and flood risk with the use of appropriate conditions in accordance with policies 28 and 32 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Ecology

- 8.92 Comments have been raised in respect of the potential impact upon local wildlife because of the overall scale of the proposed building. The Ecology Officer has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections, subject to conditions regarding compliance with the submitted BREEAM Ecology Credit Report and Bat Survey (Greengage, 2020), as well as biodiversity enhancement methods prior to occupation. Officers consider that these conditions would mitigate any significant impact upon local species and therefore the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy 70 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Sustainable Design/Construction

- 8.93 The Sustainability Officer has been consulted on the application and no objections are raised. The applicant has submitted a Design and Access Statement, Sustainability Statement and BREEAM Pre Assessment to address sustainable design and construction.
- 8.94 The scheme is targeting BREEAM accreditation using the Multi-Residential New Construction 2018 scheme. The submitted BREEAM Pre Assessment shows a current score of 76.5%, which provides a small buffer over the minimum score required for achievement of BREEAM excellent. This meets the requirements of policy 28 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and is therefore acceptable.

- 8.95 With regards to energy, the proposal adopts the energy hierarchy to reduce energy demand. The scheme is taking an all-electric approach to heating and hot water, with reference to the use of electric panel heaters and hot water via air source heat pumps. This approach helps to achieve 5 BREEAM credits for energy, which is just one credit away from the minimum requirement for a BREEAM outstanding approach to energy. In terms of improvement over Building Regulations, using the new SAP 10 carbon intensity figures suggests a 51% reduction in emissions compared to baseline Building Regulations requirements, which is acceptable. Unfortunately, the location of the proposed air source heat pumps has not been designated and therefore their potential noise levels cannot be accounted for. This additional information correlates with the information requested by the Environmental Health Officer and therefore this information could be submitted together.
- 8.96 In regard to water efficiency, the proposal is predicting a water use of 103.87 litres/person/day for units with baths, and 96.8 litres/person/day for units without baths. Given the residential nature of the proposal, the scheme should target 110 litres/person/day. The specification is still be finalised and therefore a condition in respect of water efficiency specification shall be imposed should the application be approved.
- 8.97 With regards to the issue of overheating, it is noted that detailed overheating analysis is still to be undertaken, but a high level assessment using the BREEAM requirements has been undertaken. This suggests several measures to mitigate the risk of overheating, including deep window reveals and low g value glazing on the west and south elevations. The proposed green roof will also help to reduce internal cooling loads of the building, and the trees surrounding the site will also help to provide shading.
- 8.98 Overall, the proposal is acceptable in terms of promoting sustainable design and construction, subject to conditions regarding BREEAM Design Stage Certification, BREEAM Post Construction Certification and water efficiency specification, which shall be imposed should the application be approved. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with policy 28 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

9.0 OTHER MATTERS

- 9.1 A Phase I 'Desk Study Report' (Ref:GE18872-DSRv2-JUN20 Vs2.0) produced by Geo-Environmental and dated 2nd June 2020 was submitted with the application. A site walkover was also completed. The report included a conceptual site model (CSM) which identified Made Ground on site and potential contamination from off-site industrial uses as potential sources of contamination, which is acceptable. The information in respect of contamination is deemed acceptable and conditions regarding the detection of any unexpected contamination during construction and material management, shall be imposed should the application be approved.
- 9.2 The Environmental Health Officer had acknowledged the lack of an Air Quality Assessment submitted with the application. The proposed development represents an intensification of use within the Air quality Management Area (AQMA). An Air Quality Assessment was submitted by the applicant after the formal submission however no comments have been made on this.
- 9.3 The S106 Officer has been consulted on the application and has recommended that the Council should request funding towards (list items) in accordance with the Council's Planning Obligations Strategy 2010. Should the application be approved, a S106 agreement between the Council and applicant would need to be negotiated and secured.
- 9.4 The application proposes the installation of four active Electric Vehicle Charging Points within the new car parking area. However, given the intensification of the proposed use, the Environmental Health Officer has requested additional EVPC's which can be secured by condition, should the application be approved.
- 9.5 There are concerns raised in respect of the requirement for student accommodation given the current pandemic and Brexit implications. The need for student accommodation has been assessed against policy 46 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) which has been set out within this report.
- 9.6 There is a comment raised that there is a lack of student accommodation within the east part of Cambridge which suggests that the area is not suitable for such development. The

application proposes new student accommodation to serve CSVPA. Officers have assessed the proposal against all relevant national and local planning policy, which takes into account the impact of the proposal upon the local area, concluding to refuse the application for the reasons as set out in this report.

- 9.7 There is a concern raised that should the cafe change use into a bar serving alcohol, this would increase noise levels upon local residents and discourage public use. The application proposes a cafe use. Should the application be approved, and the cafe use change to a student bar in the future, a separate planning application would need to be submitted for officers to assess the anticipated noise levels upon residents as a result of this change.
- 9.8 A concern has been raised in respect of fire safety. The applicant has submitted a fire safety strategy within the Design and Access Statement. Building Control Officers have been informally consulted on the proposal and have confirmed these fire safety procedures are satisfactory. Should the application be approved, conditions regarding the installation of fire hydrants should be imposed to ensure satisfactory measures are put in place.

10.0 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 In conclusion, the application fails to accord with a number of policies within the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and associated guidance documents, in respect of principle, design, visual impact, Conservation Area impact, loss of trees, impact upon the public open space and poor cycle parking arrangements, as set out within this report.
- 10.2 In view of the application being recommended for refusal, the applicant is entitled to appeal any refusal. Officers acknowledge that there are other concerns raised in respect of highway safety, drainage and environmental health, however, these issues are not considered to be significant to include within the main reasons for refusal as outlined below. Should the applicant wish to address these outstanding issues at the appeal stage, officers would have no objections to this information being presented to the inspector to assess as part of their decision.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE on the following grounds:

1. Due to the lack of sufficient information demonstrating a proven need for student accommodation on the site and the lack of satisfactory measures to prevent antisocial behaviour of students on and off the site, the proposal fails to accord with Policy 46 (a) and (g) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and is not supported in principle.
2. Overall, by virtue of its excessive scale, height, mass, bulk, depth and unsympathetic design, the proposal would result in a visually intrusive, overly dominant and incongruous form of development which would be out of keeping with the prevailing character of the local area and as such, is not in accordance with policies 23, 55, 56, 57 or 58 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), as well as the guidance set out within the Eastern Gate SPD.
3. Overall, by virtue of the excessive height, scale, bulk, mass and unsympathetic materials and design including the loss of trees, the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Mill Road Conservation Area which is not outweighed by public benefit arising from the scheme. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), NPPF 2019 paragraphs 193 and 196 and the provisions of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
4. Overall, the scale and height of the proposed building is deemed to be excessive and would not respect the existing trees which significantly contribute to the visual amenity of the site and local area. The removal of two trees along the New Street frontage, as well as the anticipated harm brought upon the surrounding trees would result in significant harm upon these trees and therefore the proposal is not in accordance with policy 71 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

5. The overall scale and height of the building would dominate St Matthews Piece which is designated as an area of Protected Open Space and would significantly intrude upon the sense of openness. This would ultimately detract from the character of St Matthews Piece and its associated environmental and recreational values and therefore the proposal would be contrary to policy 67 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).
6. The proposal fails to demonstrate that an acceptable amount and design of open space for students living and studying on the site can be delivered as part of the proposal to reflect the intensification of the proposed use and associated student needs. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy 68 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).
7. The proposed location of the cycle parking on the roof of the building is poor, inappropriate and is impracticable to access and would result in inadequate cycle parking within the site for students to access. The scheme therefore fails to promote high quality cycle parking and is contrary to the guidance under the Council's Cycle Parking Guidance 2010 and policy 82 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Appendix 1 – Design and Conservation Panel Comments

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