



<b>Planning Committee Date</b>	3 August 2022
<b>Report to</b>	Cambridge City Council Planning Committee
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
<b>Reference</b>	22/02111/FUL
<b>Site</b>	Kings College, Kings Parade, Cambridge
<b>Ward / Parish</b>	Newnham
<b>Proposal</b>	Installation of Antony Gormley sculpture, steel construction with concrete footing, on area of York stone paving immediately adjacent to the Wilkins Building
<b>Applicant</b>	King's College Cambridge
<b>Presenting Officer</b>	Mary Collins
<b>Reason Reported to Committee</b>	Application raises special planning policy or other considerations
<b>Member Site Visit Date</b>	6 September 2021
<b>Key Issues</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Impact of significance of setting of Grade I and Grade II Listed Buildings</li><li>2. Conservation area</li><li>3. Protected Open Space</li></ol>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>APPROVE</b> subject to conditions

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the permanent installation of a steel sculpture by the artist Anthony Gormley on an area of existing York stone paving immediately adjacent to the Wilkins Building
- 1.2 The introduction of the statue by reason of its siting, size, materials and form would be a distinctive addition into an established and widely viewed architectural ensemble and within a sensitive landscape. Historic England have indicated that as a result, the proposals will result in “less than substantial harm” to the significance of the listed buildings and landscape, and by extension the conservation area.
- 1.3 The subject commemorated through the sculpture has particular relevance to the College and its students – and its placing in this location, at the centre of college life, and on a route between the City and the Backs is argued to be important to the interpretation of the artwork and its significance.
- 1.4 The sculpture commemorates Alan Turing – who attended the College – and who’s contribution to computing science was of national and global significance. For the City, and for the College, such commemoration, by an artist of international standing, in a location within public view, but also located at the heart of existing students and visitors experience, is considered to give rise to a significant public benefit.
- 1.5 The sculpture is a freestanding artwork, which whilst significant (3.668m high) would not dominate or overwhelm the surrounding Gibbs and Wilkin’s buildings, their relationship with one another or the landscape setting of these buildings seen together. It would nevertheless introduce a distinctive, contemporary new feature into a familiar and nationally renowned view.
- 1.6 Having considered the proposals carefully, assessed the potential for alternative less visible sites and considered the significance of the siting to the public value derived from the artwork, officers are of the view that the public benefit derived from the commemoration of Alan Turing at Kings College in this case outweighs the less than substantial harm identified by Historic England to the heritage interests. The recommendation is accordingly that the application be approved.

## 2.0 Site Description and Context

None-relevant		Tree Preservation Order	
Conservation Area	x	Local Nature Reserve	
Setting of Listed Building	x	Flood Zone 1	
Building of Local Interest		Green Belt	
Historic Park and Garden	x	Protected Open Space	x

Scheduled Ancient Monument		Controlled Parking Zone	
Local Neighbourhood and District Centre		Article 4 Direction	

2.1 The application falls with the Historic Core Conservation Area. The application is within the setting of the Grade I listed buildings and is within a registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II\*. It is a Protected Open Space P&G 35 of 9.71 hectares and is a private space of King's College.

### **3.0 The Proposal**

3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the installation of a sculpture commemorating student and Fellow of Kings College, Alan Turing on an area of existing York stone paving at the confluence of existing pathways immediately adjacent to the Wilkins Building.

3.2 The sculpture designed by Sir Antony Gormley comprises an abstract metal figure, 3.668m high made from 19 gas-cut Corten Steel blocks 140 mm thick. It is described as a human body but using 'cantilever, propping and pillar construction' and an expression of the industrial and computer age using techniques only made possible through computing. The material has been chosen as a contemporary material which will weather over time.

3.3 The proposal is described as a continuation of Antony Gormley's 'Slabworks' series. Its architectural language is that of stacking, propping and cantilever, and the provisional relationship of balance between the blocks should be able to be felt as well as seen. The scale of the work allows it to stand directly on the ground without the interference of a plinth. At the same time, its scale is informed by the need for the figure to be in effective dialogue with the buildings around it. It is not so large as to impact substantially on views from the Backs – but it will be a visible feature in such views. The structure is made from Corten steel which will weather over time developing a rusty, earthy patina which mitigates its industrial production.

3.4 The artist describes the pose of the Turing sculpture as inspired by the work and life of Alan Turing himself. The gesture of turning that characterises the sculpture is the first within the 'Slabworks' series. It combines both looking forward (the head turns out along the north-south axis of the Gibbs Building) and also a self-protective gesture (with an arm curving back around the body of the figure). There will be a simple inscription of the name Turing in the paving at the foot of the sculpture.

3.5 The sculpture would be sited adjacent to the main path from the King's Front Court to the bridge, in the small open area formed by the space in between the end of the William Wilkins designed 1822 hall range, and the 1822 library and lodge ranges. Its immediate setting would be a roundel of paving designed by Sir William Holford in the early 1950s.

3.6 The sculpture will be delivered to site in pieces via Queen's Lane into Webb's Court, existing access arrangements are suitable for the delivery to take place. The sculpture will then be assembled and installed on site within a small compound.

3.7 The application is supported by letters of support for the proposal from:

- Tate Britain
- An Art Critic
- Artistic Director, Royal Academy of Arts
- Director, Tate Modern
- Former Director of the National Portrait Gallery
- Director and Marlay Curator, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

#### **4.0 Relevant Site History**

**4.1 None**

#### **5.0 Policy**

##### **5.1 National**

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2021

Circular 11/95 (Conditions, Annex A)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Environment Act 2021

Equalities Act 2010

##### **5.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018**

Policy 1: The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy 55: Responding to context

Policy 56: Creating successful places

Policy 59: Designing landscape and the public realm

Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of historic environment

Policy 67: Protected Open Space

##### **5.3 Neighbourhood Plan**

N/A

#### 5.4 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020

#### 5.5 **Other Guidance**

Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2015)

#### 6.0 **Consultations**

##### 6.1 **County Highways Development Management** - No comment on the behalf of the Highway Authority

##### 6.2 **Conservation Officer**

###### **Previous comments received 7 April 2020**

I note that Historic England (HE) has concerns regarding the introduction of the sculpture in this location at King's College. I acknowledge the cases put by both HE and the College but do not find myself in a different position to HE's.

Stemming from the College's case for it, the introduction of the sculpture is said to entail some enhancement to the significance of the King's College. This could also be considered as public benefit. However, HE also considers the introduction of the sculpture in a prominent position within the landscape would result in a moderate level of "less than substantial" harm to the significance of the listed buildings and landscape, and by extension the conservation area.

The LPA must carefully weigh the harm against the public benefits of the development. As the HE advice states, in the context of King's College, there can be no doubt that these are heritage assets of the very highest significance.

Therefore, the weight that the Council should give to their conservation should be very considerable.

In this respect, in terms of enhancement of the significance of the King's College and any public benefit resulting from the proposal, I would observe that a smaller sculpture, a material of more affinity with its context, or a less prominent location might also have some such benefits whilst avoiding the harm that HE identifies.

The sculpture is not intended as a temporary feature and its impacts must be seen in that light.

##### 6.3 **Historic England** - The application seeks approval for the erection of the Turing Memorial sculpture. The supporting information explains how the College is keen to celebrate Turing's achievements through a commemorative sculpture and a committee was established for this purpose in 2015. We recognise the consideration that went into developing the proposal and the level of supporting information that has been provided in response to our pre- application advice. The sculpture designed by Sir

Antony Gormley is an abstract metal figure, 12 feet high and constructed in rust coloured Corten steel. It is described as a human body but using 'cantilever, propping and pillar construction' and an expression of the industrial and computer age using techniques only made possible through computing. The scale is said to avoid the need for a plinth and to provide an effective dialogue with the buildings. The material has been chosen as a contemporary material which will weather over time. The sculpture would be located in the south east corner of the Great Lawn court. This area is framed by the end of Wilkins' hall range and his library, adapted in the 1930s to create a series of arches into Webb's Court. It is at the meeting point for four routes across the College.

The supporting documentation highlights the outstanding contributions of Alan Turing to several fields but particularly maths and science and most distinctively computer science, and through this to society as a whole. The public commemoration of his work through a sculpture within the College would be a very visible acknowledgement of this and strengthen the historical associations of the College, of which Turing was a Fellow, which are part of its significance. The addition of a sculpture by one of the most prominent contemporary sculptors would also add a new aspect to the artistic and aesthetic values of the College.

The introduction of the sculpture would, however, also affect the architectural, landscape and aesthetic significance of the College. It would harm the character, created by the interplay of buildings and landscape, which makes the College so remarkable a place. The proposal would see the erection of a tall and contemporary sculpture, both in its design and material, at the core of King's College, this most highly significant architectural ensemble. This would make the sculpture a very visible and eye-catching addition to the College. In height the sculpture would be twice life size, rising to the height of the windows in the hall range and the top of the arcade into Webb's Court and above the people traversing the College grounds. The cantilevered pillar and propping construction is distinctive and combined with the use of a modern material, of a very different colour and texture to that of the neighbouring buildings and landscaping, which would again make the sculpture stand out. The location of the sculpture is a prominent one. It is set in the south east corner of the Great Lawn, and we accept this is an area that has evolved over time and that the buildings themselves have been adapted. However, it would be seen in the views from the west from The Backs and the Great Lawn and from the Front Court between the Gibbs and Wilkin's buildings. The views from the west towards the Chapel, Gibbs building and Clare College are the most iconic in the city encompassing two of the finest buildings in the city with the river and distinctive meadows and lawn setting in the foreground. While the focus of the views is generally towards the Chapel to the northwest and the sculpture would be positioned to the south east of here, it would be seen in these views, and become more prominent in the closer views across the Great Lawn. In views from the west end of the Chapel the sculpture would be seen on axis terminating the path across the Great Lawn in front of the Gibbs building to the entrance to Webb's Court. The supporting information

includes photomontages illustrating the sculpture in situ. These are welcome in informing the assessment of the proposal but as the document notes they cannot completely reproduce the human experience of viewing the scene.

Considering the impact of the sculpture on site, taking account of its height and material, we suggest it would be far more visible than the images imply. The distinctive landscape setting of these highly significant buildings and the importance of the landscaping itself has been described above. The open and largely unadorned character of the Front Court, Great Lawn and the meadow allow for long, uninterrupted views of the buildings and a focused appreciation of their architectural character. The absence of other sculpture is notable within the College and in response to this the Heritage Impact Assessment discusses the context of commemorative sculpture in the College and in Cambridge and Oxford. This notes sculpture has been part of the built environment of colleges since the beginning of the University and has flourished since the 1960s. However, Kings, in contrast to most of the other Colleges, has only the Victorian fountain topped by the founder at the centre of the Front Court.

In sum, the character of the College flows from its interplay of buildings and landscape. The simplicity of the landscape provides a foil to the buildings and together the whole is greater than the parts. In this context the addition of such an eye-catching sculpture in a prominent location would erode the character which contributes to the significance of the College. While the addition of the new sculpture would add a new dimension to the historic and artistic aspects of the College, it would also therefore detract from the architectural, landscape and aesthetic significance of the College, and result in some harm to its significance.

**6.4 County Archaeology** – No objections or requirements for this development

**6.5 The Gardens Trust** – In its role as Statutory Consultee on the above application which affects King's College, an historic designed landscape of national importance which is included by Historic England on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II\*, do not wish to comment on the proposals at this stage. However, emphasise that this does not in any way signify either approval or disapproval of the proposals.

**7.0 Third Party Representations**

None received

**8.0 Member Representations**

Not applicable

**9.0 Local Groups / Petition**

Not applicable

9.1 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations are available on the Council's website.

## **10.0 Assessment**

### **10.1 Principle of Development**

- 10.2 Policy 55 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that all new development responds appropriately to its context. Policy 59 meanwhile requires a coordinated approach to the installation of public artworks – encouraging careful consideration of the interplay between landscape, buildings and the public realm. Policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan seeks to ensure that proposals for development preserve or enhance Cambridge's historic environment and demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset, the wider context within which the asset sits and any impact upon it. This reflects National Planning Policy Guidance and the clear legal obligations on the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of buildings or their setting in line with S66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 10.3 The application site is on protected open space. Policy 67 (Protection of open space) states that development proposals will not be permitted which would harm the character of, or lead to the loss of, open space of environmental and/or recreational importance.
- 10.3 Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Paragraph 200 states "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."
- 10.4 Historic England have concluded in their response, that the proposals will give rise to "less than substantial harm" to the designated heritage assets. The conservation officer echoes this conclusion, indicating that "...these are heritage assets of the very highest significance. Therefore, the weight that the Council should give to their conservation should be very considerable" and considers that an alternative sculpture in a different material might offer similar benefits with less impact upon the heritage assets. The sculpture is also in this case proposed to be permanent and not a temporary installation. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF advises 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."



- 10.5 Having regard therefore to the statutory obligations on the Council and the national and Local planning policy context, the acceptability of the principle of the development proposed, is in this case and given the provisions of the Act, intimately linked with consideration of its impacts upon the exceptional heritage assets surrounding and forming the application site and the consideration of the level of public benefit arising from the proposals.

### **Heritage Assets**

- 10.6 The application falls within the Historic Core Conservation Area. The application is within the setting of the Grade I listed buildings and is within a registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II\*.
- 10.7 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that a local authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, Listed Buildings. Section 72 provides that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 10.8 The National Planning Policy Framework describes how local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset and take this into account to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation and any aspect of a proposal (paragraph 195). It establishes the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, (paragraph 197). It continues that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance, (paragraph 199).
- 10.9 The heritage assets in this case are of the finest quality. Their significance derives from the ensemble of buildings, two of which are the finest examples of architecture of their period nationally and within Cambridge, in a distinctive landscape setting. The Chapel is described in The Buildings of England series as 'the most magnificent building of Cambridge and its greatest work of the Middle Ages' (Bradley and Pevsner, pages 125 & 132). The neighbouring Gibbs building is described as 'the greatest Collegiate building of eighteenth-century Cambridge' (page 127). These two great buildings are seen alongside each other in the magnificent views across the Front Court and The Backs and Great Lawn. The completion of the Front Court was left to William Wilkins in the 1820s, who designed the distinctive entrance from King's Parade and the south range. There is further work to the south and west of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The landscaping was laid out between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries and comprises a linear series of open spaces. Those of the Front Court, Great Lawn and The Backs provide an open and simple setting against

which the buildings are seen. Again, Bradley and Pevsner describe the Front Court and Great Lawn 'these two big lawns are the most memorable piece of visual planning at King's. They distinguish it from all other colleges at Cambridge and Oxford and are exactly right in conjunction with the straightness and bigness of the chapel and Gibbs building' (page 128).

- 10.10 In addition to the architectural and aesthetic significance of King's College, it also derives a very high level of historical significance from the people associated with the College over the centuries. The commemoration of Alan Turing through this proposed installation, seeks to reflect that continued significance. The exceptional significance of the College is reflected in the high designations. All the buildings named above are listed at Grade I and the landscape at Grade II\*.
- 10.11 The College lies within the Central Cambridge Conservation Area where it is appreciated in conjunction with the other colleges along the river. The Conservation Area Appraisal illustrates the key positive views to the focal features of the Gibbs Building, the Chapel and south range of Clare College. It states 'the views across The Backs are the most frequently reproduced images of Cambridge, with the view of Clare College and King's College Chapel being the iconic image used to represent the university and city around the world. The quality of these views is a combination of the green setting of manicured lawns with wilder paddocks, the river with its traditional activity of punting and architecturally elaborate bridges, the spectacular architecture of the historic college buildings as the focus of the view (without interruption of discordant structures), and the clear space behind, again without interference of structures that might draw attention away from historic college buildings' (pages 2 and 3).
- 10.12 Given that the heritage assets identified are of the very highest significance, the weight that the Council should give to their conservation should therefore be very considerable. The Framework is also clear that any harm, requires clear and convincing justification.
- 10.13 With respect to the impact of the proposal on the significance of the identified heritage assets, the proposal would introduce a contemporary sculpture, both in its design and material, at the heart of King's College, located within its most significant architectural ensemble. The applicants (and artist) have explained that the siting of the proposal is deliberate – reflecting a clear ambition to ensure that the subject and their significance to modern life is part of the day-to-day experience of students (and visitors).
- 10.14 The photomontages accompanying the application indicate that the sculpture will be a clearly visible insertion into the space between the Wilkins building and the Gibbs building – and within the wider panorama with the College and its lawn when viewed from The Backs. In height the sculpture would be twice life size, rising to the height of the windows in the hall range and the top of the arcade into Webb's Court and above the people traversing the College grounds. The cantilevered pillar and propping construction is distinctive and combined with the use of a modern material, of a very

different colour and texture to that of the neighbouring buildings and landscaping, which would again make the sculpture stand out.

- 10.15 Historic England have accordingly described the location of the sculpture as prominent. Set in the south east corner of the Great Lawn, it would be seen in the views from the west from The Backs and the Great Lawn and from the Front Court between the Gibbs and Wilkin's buildings. The views from the west towards the Chapel, Gibbs building, and Clare College are the most iconic in the city encompassing two of the finest buildings in the city with the river and distinctive meadows and lawn setting in the foreground. While the focus of the views is generally towards the Chapel to the northwest and the sculpture would be positioned to the south east, it would be seen in these views. Historic England consider the sculpture would also become more prominent in the closer views across the Great Lawn. In views from the west end of the Chapel the sculpture would be seen on axis terminating the path across the Great Lawn in front of the Gibbs building to the entrance to Webb's Court.
- 10.16 Historic England note that the character of the College flows from its interplay of buildings and landscape. The simplicity of the landscape provides a foil to the buildings and together the whole is greater than the parts. In this context they consider that the addition of such an eye-catching sculpture in a prominent location would erode the character which contributes to the significance of the College. While they recognise that the addition of the new sculpture would add a new dimension to the historic and artistic aspects of the College, they consider it would also detract from the architectural, landscape and aesthetic significance of the College, and result in some harm to its significance.
- 10.17 For this reason, Historic England are of the view that the introduction of an eye-catching sculpture in a prominent position within the landscape at King's would be odds with the existing character of the College. This would result in harm, of a less than substantial nature, to the significance of the listed buildings and landscape, and by extension the conservation area. This harm would be of a moderate level.
- 10.18 As harm has been identified, to the setting of the listed buildings, historic park/garden and conservation area, any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, paragraph 202.
- 10.19 The Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723, Revision date: 23 07 2019 states:

*Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit.*

*However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.*

10.20 The applicant has provided a Statement on Public Benefit which lists the perceived benefits as follows:

- *It is hard to over-estimate the influence of Alan Turing. The Turing Award, often called the 'Nobel Prize of Computing', has been awarded annually since 1966 for fundamental contributions to Computer Science. Naming this award after Turing was an acknowledgment of the central importance of Turing's work in the emerging science of computing from the 1930's onwards. Turing also made major contributions in mathematics and biology. Until relatively recently, his contributions to the war effort were still unknown to the public, as well as was his persecution as a homosexual.*
- *These two aspects of Turing's life have become central to his popular reputation as the result of several books and a movie focussed on his biography. This led to a recent royal pardon of Turing. One index of the public esteem in which he is now held is the portrait of Turing that appears on the new fifty pound note.*
- *King's College is very keen to make some public acknowledgement of Alan Turing and his relationship with the College, the University and the City of Cambridge. Given Turing's huge intellectual importance and his influence on contemporary science and culture, it is very apt that this acknowledgement should be in the form of a sculpture by an internationally admired contemporary artist, whose work also often depends on the use of sophisticated computing software. Antony Gormley's sculpture is designed to reflect both Turing's brilliance and his vulnerability; but at the same time the sculpture also embodies the transformation of the industrial into the information age – a transformation in which Turing played such a crucial part.*
- *Although much of Turing's life and work took place in academic arenas, his influence on the wider world has been incalculable. For this reason, any public celebration of Turing in Cambridge needs to be integrated meaningfully into several contexts: the College, the University and the wider City. In choosing this site for the Alan Turing sculpture, the aim of the artist and the College has been to do just this. The proposed site is at the axis point of several paths: students and other members of the College traverse this confluence point daily, but University members and Cambridge residents crossing between the centre of town and the Backs will also pass directly by it. Other College visitors will be able to see it from across the lawn to the west of the Gibbs Building.*
- *The sculpture will contribute to the conversation that is already taking place in the front court between the Chapel, the Gibbs Building and the Wilkins Building. But the sculpture will also represent the fact that the scientific and scholarly work that happens here is of necessity cutting-edge and, by its very nature, looks to the future. The sculpture will materialise for the constantly self-renewing community of the College a sense of how each*

*generation can contribute to this process. For these reasons, too, then, we believe that it needs to be situated at the centre of the life of the College.*

- King's College offers University members and Cambridge residents a passage across the river Cam. The College recognises the importance of access to this path and the bridge for both the University and the Cambridge community and believe that the addition of the Alan Turing sculpture to this busy route will be a source of interest and pleasure to many, and a substantive public benefit to the whole of Cambridge.*
- The College would be open to Cambridge residents and University members. They will be able to pass directly by the Alan Turing sculpture as they traverse the College on the path and bridge between the Porters' Lodge and the back gate. A Residents' Card lasting three years is available to anyone living up to twelve miles from Great St Mary's at a cost of £10. Current University members can use their University Card, and a Cam Card is available to all University alumni. College porters and custodians are on duty throughout the times when the College is open.*
- Due to the need to prevent crowding and noise along the working side of the College, the very substantial number of visitors to the Chapel and College grounds take a different route, on the northern side of the front and back courts, and along the river to the bridge and Xu Zhimo memorial. Visitors will be able to see the Turing sculpture from across the court. However, the College Council has agreed that the College should develop plans for regular, guided visitor access to the sculpture at a number of pre-bookable specified times, and possibly also access on National Heritage Day.*
- King's College's first commitment however must be to the community of students and scholars who study, teach and research here and this includes the many people who have in the past gone on to take the fruits of their studies out into the wider world, but also the many who will do so in the future. Turing was one such person. The College takes its responsibility for mentoring and enabling the next generation very seriously, and there are major public benefits associated with this. Commissioning a piece of the very best contemporary art will exemplify for our students how history is embedded in the built environment.*

10.21 To support their statement, the applicant has provided a map to show the indicative flow of College members, University members, Cambridge residents and College visitors and to illustrate how they will interact with the proposed work.

10.22 Faced with a range of competing views on the merits of the proposals – including endorsements from figures within a number of leading artistic institutions, officers convened a site visit by members of the planning committee in September 2021. The site visit considered the proposed siting, and a potential alternative site, close to the river edge in the garden to the Kennedy Building. This alternative site for the sculpture, would be away from the main movement routes through and within the College, and accordingly less embedded in the college and student experience. Given the rationale behind the proposed site, the applicants and artist indicated that this more discrete siting would serve to reduce and diminish the level

of integration within the life of the college community where Turing lived and worked "...and would take on the status of an isolated icon or some kind of trophy."

- 10.23 Recognising the conclusions reached by Historic England and the views of the College and artist, officers agree that the siting of the proposals will contribute both to its impact, but also to the significance of the artwork – to the College and the City, and therefore to any consideration of its public benefit. The photomontages give an indication of the potential impact upon the setting of the listed buildings surrounding the site and upon the listed garden. The structure would be a new and distinct form in the exceptional composition of built form and landscape – within this part of the conservation area and the City. The significance of the installation and the public benefit associated with it however derives from more than its physical form and composition. Officers consider that the specific relevance of Alan Turing to the College and its present and future students is also an important aspect of the public benefit.

### **Impact on Protected Open Space**

- 10.24 The application site is on protected open space. Policy 67 states that development proposals will not be permitted which would harm the character of, or lead to the loss of, open space of environmental and/or recreational importance. The Backs with their interplay of grand College buildings and the well-treed landscape contribute to Cambridge's most famous landscaped area. This protected open space makes a major contribution to the setting, character and environmental quality of the city as well as to recreational resources. The protected open space is lightly ornamented, with only limited street furniture. The siting of the structure, in close proximity to the Wilkins Building entrance to Webb's Court entrance mean that its impact upon the open space itself, will in officers view not diminish the importance of this protected open space, its ecological and environmental contribution or its value. The proposal would accord with Policy 67 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

### **Planning Balance**

- 10.25 In this case, Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Acts requires that the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of buildings or their setting and to the conservation area. In this case, Historic England have concluded that the proposals give rise to less than substantial harm of moderate significance – engaging paragraph 202 of the NPPF which requires that the identified harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Development Plan polices raise no objection to the principle of the development, and instead focus on the consideration of impacts – and benefit.
- 10.26 Members were able to visit the site for themselves, and to hear from the artist about the reasons behind the siting of the sculpture – summarised in

the report above. The applicants have presented what they consider to be the public benefits derived from the siting, and the sculpture to the College, its students, and visitors and to the City as a whole. Officers agree that these matters are capable of being public benefits.

## **10.27 Summary of harm**

The introduction of the statue, by reason of its siting in a prominent position at the core of the King's College architectural ensemble and within the sensitive landscape, as well as its distinctive contemporary cantilevered pillar and propping design form, height and use of materials of a very different colour and texture to that of the neighbouring buildings, would be clearly visible and eye catching but at odds with the particular character created by the interplay of existing buildings and landscape. This would result in harm, of a less than substantial nature, to the significance of the listed buildings and landscape, and by extension the conservation area. This harm would be of a moderate level to heritage assets of the highest national significance and would be permanent.

### **Summary of benefits**

10.27 The public commemoration of Alan Turing's work through a distinctive and striking contemporary sculpture within the College would amount to a very visible acknowledgement of his significant contribution to society and to science. Given Turing's association with Kings College, commemoration of his contribution on a prominent site within the heart of contemporary college life, and movement through its grounds, is considered to be an important part of the public benefit derived. This benefit would be experienced by students, visitors to the college and residents of Cambridge. Whilst noting the distinctive characteristics and form of the sculpture, the work is by one of the most prominent and well-known contemporary sculptors, Antony Gormley, who also studied at Cambridge. Recognition of these two significant figures and their contribution to science and to art, through the sculpture would add a new aspect to the artistic and aesthetic values of the College, the University and the City.

## **11.0 Recommendation**

11.1 While the addition of the new sculpture would impact upon the architectural, landscape and aesthetic significance of the College, and result in some harm to its significance, it is considered that it would nevertheless provide significant public benefit by adding a new dimension to the historic and artistic aspects of the College that would outweigh that harm. Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 66(1) and section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is accordingly recommended for approval.

**Approve** subject to:

-The planning conditions as set out below.

## **1.0 Planning Conditions**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

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

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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### Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- Cambridge Local Plan 2018
- Cambridge Local Plan SPDs