



**GREATER CAMBRIDGE**  
SHARED PLANNING

## **Disability Consultative Panel**

**Tuesday, 5 September 2023**

**14:00 – 16:30**

### **Venue**

**Swansley A&B, Ground floor, South Cambridgeshire Hall,  
South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne  
and via Microsoft 'Teams'**

### **Notes**

#### Attendees

Mark Taylor	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Chair)
Rosalind Bird	MS Society/Architect (retired)
Sue Simms	Former Housing Officer
Betty Watts	Cambridge Deaf Association
Katie Roberts	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Notes)
Mairead O'Sullivan	Principal Planning Officer, Strategic Sites, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (for presentation 1)
Alice Young	Senior Planning Officer, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (for presentations 2 and 3)

#### Apologies

Jane Renfrew, David Baxter, John Taylor

### **Presentation 1: 440 Cambridge Science Park**

#### Presenters

Constantino Baranda (Allies and Morrison)  
Maddie Wild (Sphere25)  
Katie Brown (Concilio)

The presenter, Costantino Baranda, delivered a detailed presentation about the scheme, which is located on the Cambridge Science Park, north of the City centre, mentioning the aim to submit the planning application in the next few months. He described the vision and design concept of the scheme, the landscape principles and landscape concept before providing more detailed information about the proposals for a research and development lab enabled office building. He described the architecture, designed to create a compact building form flooded with natural light before focusing on the design and access of the site. He explained that accessibility has been taken into account by the entire design team, commenting on the materials and wayfinding, step free access entrances, shallow gradients within the landscape, ground floor uses, the design of 2 typical floors and façade materiality.

## Panel comments and queries

- It was suggested that, in the seating areas, seating arms be used to help people to stand up and that the seating be of varied heights with room for wheelchairs alongside.
- Betty Watts commented favourably on the induction loops and suggested that reverberation be suppressed in the reception area.
- Rosalind Bird praised the team for their attention to external works and planting, commenting favourably that, although, there is a lot of gravel (which can be challenging for wheelchair users), it is stabilised. In response to a request about the access between the disabled parking and the building it was shown that there is step free access from the parking to the main lobby.
- Referring to the gravel, the Chair suggested the use of bonded pea shot gravel, owing to its resilience.
- The Chair emphasised the importance of evacuation procedures in the building, mentioning the possibility of fire in laboratories, as well as potential concerns caused by false alarms for wheelchair users, who might not know if there is a fire and, if so, how they will be able to evacuate the building.
- The Chair asked about the location of the nearest bus stop for the guided bus, noting that an ambulant disabled person would not be expected to be able to walk more than 100 metres unaided or without needing a rest. He suggested that resting points be incorporated on the route to the bus stop and that a proposal perhaps be put forward to the current landowner on the merits of installing a bench.
- The Chair commented that many cyclists struggle with the proposed two-tier racking. In response, Costantino Baranda mentioned that there will be a mixture of Sheffield spaces and two-tier spaces.
- In response to a query by the Chair, it was confirmed there would not be much solar glare.
- In response to a query by the Chair about the colour of the décor and the signage programme, Costantino Baranda mentioned that they would be developed as part of the next stage of the design. The Chair suggested the use of contrasting colours (such as walls a light colour and frames a darker colour). He also suggested that a clear font, such as Arial, be used for the signage, with a mixture of upper and lower case characters. (dark colours on light or vice versa).
- The Chair commented that there have been some 'hybrid' designs for the changing room of a toilet to also be used as a changing places toilet and he offered to send the presenters some appropriate details.

The Chair expressed his appreciation for the comprehensive presentation and invited the presenters to deliver a second presentation once they have developed the next stages of the design or to contact him to seek any further advice.

## **Presentation 2: Westbrook Centre, Cambridge**

### Presenters

Richard Dryden, Access & Inclusion Consultant

Lisa Liu, Reef

Olivia Frew, Reef

Tim Price, Savills

Amelia Robson, Savills

In their introduction the presenters explained that the Westbrook Centre is part of a wider platform of life science buildings being developed by Reef in partnership with UBS, adding that there are currently 8 assets in UK.

The site is located north of Jesus Green and between two train stations (Cambridge and Cambridge North) and can be accessed off Milton road, near the former Cambridge City ground. A description was provided of the exterior and interior of the existing building, and it was noted that the Access strategy conforms to the Equality Act 2010. Attention was drawn to the circulation around the buildings, the café (in the main publicly accessible area), the lifts, toilets, showers, cycling provision, evacuation lifts and procedures and it was mentioned that there would be greater focus on the details in the next phase.

### Panel comments and queries

- It was confirmed that consultation had taken place with the nearby sheltered alms houses and that, although they are not seeking a direct connection with the site, they would welcome the opportunity to use it.
- It was confirmed that there will be a taxi drop off and accessible drop off along Westbook road, as well as provision for mobility scooters.
- In response to a query by the Chair, it was confirmed that the Blue badge parking will be located in the basement and that visitors with Blue Badges will be able to park nearer the entrance.
- In response to a query by the Chair, it was mentioned that light in the roof will bring in natural light into the central reception areas.
- The Chair mentioned that patches of light and shade can be confusing to those who are visually impaired, and that they can sometimes be minimized by shading on the glass or netting.
- The Chair mentioned that, in the reception area particularly, it is quite important to have a good colour contrast between the areas and the dropped kerb, as well as a loop on the Reception.
- The Chair commented that there have been some 'hybrid' designs for the changing room of a toilet to also be used as a changing places toilet and he offered to send the presenters some appropriate details.

The Chair thanked the presenting team, highlighting the benefit of the input of the Access Consultant.

## **Presentation 3: Clarendon House, Cambridge**

### Presenters

Andrew Winter, Stantec  
Colin Morrison, Allies and Morrison

In his introduction, the presenter, Colin Morrison, commented on the location of the site, close to Hills road and Cambridge Railway Station, and the current condition of Clarendon House, adding that the proposals are to retain the structure of the existing building.

He discussed the proposed site access by public transport, car, bike and as a pedestrian and described the main features of the ground floor, basement (including car parking, cycle parking, showers and lockers) and the upper floors, focusing on the accommodation, circulation and sanitary accommodation. It was noted that all office areas are a short distance from a wheelchair accessible WC.

Colin Morrison concluded his presentation by mentioning the lift access to all office floors, which meets the appropriate specifications, and the stairs, which also follow the relevant guidance. In terms of the means of escape, it is intended that a comprehensive escape strategy for disabled people is developed and that staff are adequately trained.

### Panel queries and comments

- in response to a query about the 'superloos' it was confirmed that there is an accessible toilet on each floor and at least one of the 'superloos' will include an outward opening door and grab rails.
- The Chair commented that there have been some 'hybrid' designs for the changing room of a toilet to also be used as a changing places toilet and he offered to send the presenters some appropriate details.
- The Chair asked about a 'triangular' building against the railway line under the bridge, recalling that, according to a previous planning application, there was some form of access from the cycle path to the guided bus. He asked if there would be any way of getting to the offices via the nearer route rather than going all the way round. It was confirmed that there is a direct cycle route through to Clarendon road.
- The Chair commented that there have been some 'hybrid' designs for the changing room of a toilet to also be used as a changing places toilet and he offered to send the presenters some appropriate details.
- The Chair commented that there are no evacuation lifts but, as a very low risk building, they would not immediately request that.
- In response to the Chair's comment about the double doors, Colin Morrison mentioned that the internal arrangements are developing in terms of certain configurations and 2 sets of doors will be omitted in due course. The Chair mentioned a preference for asymmetrical double doors.

The Chair thanked the presenters for their presentation.

Date of next meeting: 3 October 2023.