



25/02831/FUL– Land at Bateman Street, Cambridge

Application details

Report to: Cambridge City Council Planning Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward: Petersfield

1. **Proposal:** The application seeks planning permission for alterations to the existing access including improvements to the roadway by installing an impermeable surface, the introduction of an infiltration trench to provide drainage for the new impermeable surfaces, the removal of an existing hedgerow and replacement with planting, the provision of additional cycle parking for users of the Plant Growth Laboratory, and the resurfacing of St Marys Access road with a delineation of kerb line for the pedestrian route.

Applicant: Chancellor, Masters and Scholars, University of Cambridge

Presenting officer: John McAteer

Reason presented to committee: Called in by the delegation panel

Member site visit date: N/A

Key issues: 1. Design, Layout, Scale and Landscaping

2. Tree Protection

3. Biodiversity

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

Report contents

Document section	Document heading
1	Executive summary
2	Site description and context
3	The proposal
4	Relevant site history
5	Policy
6	Consultations
7	Principle of Development
8	Assessment
9	Design, layout, scale and landscaping
10	Trees
11	Heritage assets
12	Biodiversity
13	Water management and flood risk
14	Highway safety and transport
15	Amenity
16	Recommendation
17	Planning conditions

Table 1 Contents of report

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for alterations to the existing access including improvements to the roadway by installing an impermeable surface, the introduction of an infiltration trench to provide drainage for the new impermeable surfaces, the removal of an existing hedgerow and replacement with planting, the provision of additional cycle parking for users of the Plant Growth Laboratory, and the resurfacing of St Marys Access road with a delineation of kerb line for the pedestrian route.
- 1.2 In particular, the proposal includes the removal of a large portion of an existing Yew hedge that runs along the northern edge of the access road and is approximately 140m in length, running from the rear of St Mary's Convent to just past the rear of number 3 Bateman Mews. The hedge has been estimated to be in the region of 10 years old and is in good health.
- 1.3 The applicants state that the proposal has come about following an earlier withdrawn application in the context of the following:
- 1.4 *'A previous application (24/03297/FUL) was submitted for alterations to the existing access, which included a segregated pedestrian and cycle access. Following comments received from highways who raised concerns over the Dutch kerbed and comments received the Landscape*

Officer about lack of Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, the application was withdrawn. Comments were also received that no additional trees were proposed following the removal of those in the hedgerow and further information was needed on the proposed planting. Since the withdrawal of the previous application amendments have been made to remove the Dutch kerbed, remove the segregated cycle and pedestrian access, which now keeps the access in the existing location and provides additional space for planting along the boundary. The application is now accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment ...'

1.5 *Further the applicants set out that:*

1.6 *'The hedge along the boundary with the properties on Bateman Mews will be removed to allow for the construction of the infiltration trench, which will enable the construction and longevity of the impermeable surfacing of the roadway. An assessment to whether the hedge could be retained was undertaken however due to the need for the infiltration trench and constraint of the utilities within the roadway this was not possible. This loss in vegetation will be replaced with an area of meaningful, biodiverse and ecologically high value planting which will be specified by the University of Cambridge's appointed landscape architect and ecologist.'*

1.7 Members should note that in assessing this application, there is already a roadway in situ and the overall use will remain the same. However, the proposal will improve the access for all users by providing clear and coherent design as well provide a smooth roadway which will be accessible for all users. Officers accept the need for the replacement road design and the revised landscaping proposals that arise from it and recommend that the Planning Committee **approve** the proposal.

Consultee	Object / No objection / No comment
Conservation Officer	No Objection
Local Highways Authority	No Objection

Table 2

Ecology Officer	No Objection
Environmental Health	No Objection
Landscape Officer	No Objection
Tree Officer	No Objection
Drainage	No Objection
Third Party Representations (32)	20 Objections

Consultee summary

2. Site description and context

- 2.1 The existing site comprises the access road to the Botanical Gardens, Sainsbury Lab and Plant Growth Lab and lies within the Central Conservation Area of the City of Cambridge. The Grounds of the Botanical Gardens are classified as part of the City Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 2.2 The site has residential terrace properties located on Bateman Street and Norwich Street to the North, the Botanical Gardens to the South, and residential and commercial areas to the East and West.

3. The proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for alterations to the existing access including improvements to the roadway by installing an impermeable surface, the introduction of an infiltration trench to provide drainage for the new impermeable surfaces, the removal of an existing hedgerow and replacement with planting, the provision of additional cycle parking for users of the Plant Growth Laboratory, and the resurfacing of St Marys Access road with a delineation of kerb line for the pedestrian route.
- 3.2 The application has been amended to address representations; the landscape design plan has been revised several times, removing trees from the proposed replacement hedge to address neighbour objections, and additional plans have been added to provide clarity for interested parties. Revised Flood Risk Assessment Calculations have been provided

to address Drainage concerns, and likewise revised BNG Metrics and Assessment have been submitted to address concerns raised by Ecology.

- 3.3 A similar application was submitted in 2024 under planning reference 24/03297/FUL. However, this received objections from the Landscape and Highways Teams and Officers recommended that the application be withdrawn.

4. Relevant site history

Reference	Description	Outcome
24/03297/FUL	Alterations to the existing access road due to issues with current drainage scheme. The main changes proposed are: improvements to the roadway by installing a more robust impermeable surface, segregating pedestrian and cyclist facilities from vehicle traffic, introduction of an infiltration trench to provide positive drainage for the new impermeable surfaces, removal of an existing hedgerow and replacement with greater value planting, provision of additional cycle parking for users of the Plant Growth Laboratory.	Withdrawn

Table 2 Relevant site history

5. Policy

5.1 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2019

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design

Circular 11/95 (Conditions, Annex A)

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)

EIA Directives and Regulations - European Union legislation with regard to environmental assessment and the UK's planning regime remains unchanged despite it leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Environment Act 2021

ODPM Circular 06/2005 – Protected Species

Equalities Act 2010

5.2 Cambridge Local Plan (2018)

Policy 31: Integrated water management and the water cycle

Policy 32: Flood risk

Policy 55: Responding to context

Policy 56: Creating successful places

Policy 59: Designing landscape and the public realm

Policy 61: Heritage

Policy 69: Protection of sites of biodiversity and geodiversity importance

Policy 70: Protection of priority species and habitats

Policy 71: Trees

5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016

Development affecting Conservation Areas SPD – Adopted 2009

Landscape in New Developments SPD – Adopted March 2010

Trees and Development Sites SPD – Adopted January 2009

Developments (2010)

5.4 Area Guidelines

Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2015)

6. Consultations

Conservation Officer- No Objection

- 6.1 No Objection was received from the Conservation Officer. The application was assessed and it was considered that the proposal would not give rise to any harm to heritage assets.

Ecology Officer- No Objection

- 6.2 The Ecology officer originally placed a holding objection on the proposal subject to further ecology information. Revised BNG calculations were provided, and the holding objection was removed, subject to conditions for statutory BNG provision, ecological measures, and ecology enhancement.

Environmental Health- No Objection

- 6.3 No objection was received from the Environmental Health Officer subject to conditions for construction/demolition hours, and demolition / construction collections/deliveries.

Drainage Officer- No Objection

- 6.4 The Drainage Officer originally placed a holding objection on the proposal subject to further information. Revised drainage calculations were provided and the officer confirmed that their objection could be removed.

Landscape Officer- No Objection

- 6.5 Informal consultations brought no objections from the Landscape Officer. The loss of the existing hedge was noted, but the necessity of the works and the ecological diversity of the replacement hedge was appreciated.

Trees Officer- No Objection

- 6.6 No objection was received from the trees officer. They advised that the risk to trees on site is low, given that the excavation will not extend below the depth of existing surfacing. They confirmed that there were no arboricultural reasons why the development could not proceed.

Local Highways Officer – No Objection

- 6.7 No objection was received from the Local Highways Officer. No significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway was found to result from the proposal should it gain the benefit of planning permission.

7. Third party representations

- 7.1 20 representations have been received, all in objection.
- 7.2 Those in objection have raised the following issues:
- Loss of hedging
 - New trees impacted neighbouring properties
 - Irrigation and drainage concerns
 - Loss of biodiversity in the area
- 7.3 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.

8. Assessment

- 8.1 From the consultation responses and representations received and from an inspection of the site and the surroundings, the key issues are:
- Principle of development
 - Design, layout, scale and landscaping
 - Trees
 - Heritage assets
 - Biodiversity
 - Highway safety and transport impacts
 - Car and cycle parking
 - Amenity
 - Third party representations

9. Principle of Development

- 9.1 The proposed development seeks to make alterations to the existing access road on site, creating a more robust and impermeable surface and a new infiltration trench and additional cycle parking. Officers consider that the proposed works are necessary for the continuing effectiveness of the access road, which serves the Sainsbury Lab, Plant Growth Lab and the rear of the Botanical Gardens.
- 9.2 The principle of the development is acceptable and in accordance with the Local Plan.

Design, layout, scale and landscaping

- 9.3 The proposed alterations to the access would have a very limited impact upon the surrounding area, aside from the removal of the hedgerow which will be discussed below. Landscaping Officers have been consulted on the proposal, and whilst the loss of the hedge still forms part of the proposal, the requirement for its loss is deemed necessary and justifies the works. The changes are considered to be necessary, minor in scale, and justifiable under current legislative criteria. To ensure that the local residents are not impacted by lighting pollution, the applicants advise that no lighting which has tall columns is proposed, with downward facing lighting bollards proposed to reduce indirect light pollution. The new asphalt surface will be finished in a buff colour, which is acceptable.
- 9.4 Overall, the proposed development is a high-quality design that would contribute positively to its surroundings and be appropriately landscaped. The proposal is compliant with policies 55, 56 and 59 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

10. Trees

- 10.1 The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement, and Tree Protection Plan which have all been reviewed by the Trees Officer.
- 10.2 As per the advice of the Trees Officer, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable. The details laid out in the three tree protection documents are deemed sufficient to address any potential harm to protected trees in the area.
- 10.3 The removal of the hedge has been justified by the requirement for a traditional filter drain along the northern edge of the site to service the new asphalt surface of the road, precisely where the current hedge is located. The proposed replacement hedge would be planted just north of the existing at 1.5 metres in height and maintained at 1.8 metres height. These dimensions are considered sufficient to replicate the appearance and noise attenuation properties of the existing hedge as soon as planting is complete. In addition, the proposed hedge would comprise a variety of species which would improve the biodiversity of the local area, in comparison with the existing mono-species Yew hedge.
- 10.4 The Trees Officer has advised that by its nature the current hedge is not protected by a TPO or its location within the Conservation Area. Whilst

officers acknowledge the loss of the hedge, there is no legislative reason why its removal should not be permitted, and the proposed replacement hedge would serve the same form and function for residents in the area.

- 10.5 Subject to conditions as appropriate, the proposal would accord with policies 59 and 71 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

11. Heritage assets

- 11.0 The Cambridge University Botanic Garden is a Grade II* Park and Garden and the site is also within the Cambridge Central Conservation Area, also known as New Town and Glisson Road Common Conservation Area.
- 11.1 The Conservation officer has reviewed the proposal and has not objected stating that no heritage harm would arise from the proposal. The changes to the access would have very limited impact upon the Conservation Area or Botanic Gardens.
- 11.2 The proposal would not give rise to any harmful impact on the identified heritage assets and is compliant with the provisions of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, the NPPF and policy 61 of the Local Plan.

12. Biodiversity and Ecology

- 12.1 In accordance with policy and circular 06/2005 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation', the application is accompanied by a preliminary ecological appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which sets out that the proposed development will result in a net gain in habit biodiversity of +10.06%, and a net gain in hedgerow biodiversity of +122.08%.
- 12.2 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Ecology Officer. They advise that the site does not lie within any impact risk zones for statutory protected sites however the site lies within Botanic Garden City Wildlife Site, designated for its invertebrate population. Local species records show the presence of species such as bats, badger, hedgehog, great crested newt, water vole, birds, flowering plants, and invertebrates.
- 12.3 The site consists of sealed surface, unvegetated unsealed surface, sparsely vegetated land, shrubs, scattered tree, and a hedgerow with trees. Much of the works on site are to the unsealed surface to replace this with a sealed surface. The hedgerow and underlying sparsely vegetated land is to be replaced with a grassland and new hedgerow of a

higher biodiversity value. No habitats of value, or of contribution to the CWS designation, are impacted. As such, although the development lies within the CWS boundary, the works are acceptable in regards to CWS impact. No objection is raised to the proposal. Several conditions to ensure the protection of species and the estimated biodiversity net gain is delivered are recommended.

- 12.4 Officers are satisfied that the proposed development complies with the Biodiversity SPD 2022, the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and 06/2005 Circular advice.

13. Water management and flood risk

- 13.1 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered at low surface water flood risk. The applicants state that the proposed replacement of the road's surface will provide a long-term solution to a current failing road surface. In practice, the prior design of a permeable surface to help reduce surface water runoff typically, is a more sustainable practice than standard asphalt. However, in its current state and with the regular need for maintenance, any benefits it may have had are no longer being realised. The scheme is designed in line with the SUDs Manual and Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 13.2 The applicants have submitted Drainage calculations in support of the proposal and upon review the Drainage Officer has advised that they are acceptable and no further information is required.
- 13.3 It is therefore considered that the applicants have suitably addressed the issues of water management and flood risk, and subject to conditions the proposal is in accordance with policies 31 and 32 of the Local Plan and NPPF advice.

14. Highway safety and transport impacts

- 14.1 The applicants set out that the access from Bateman Street will be improved, not only for the Botanic Garden roadway but also the access for St Marys School. Due to the restricted width along the school's land to the gate of the Botanic Gardens, caused by existing parking, a provisional area for pedestrians will be provided along the western edge giving a clear and direct route to the entrance. Flush set granite kerbs shall be used in the existing corridor to delineate this separation from vehicles.

Additional cycle parking for the users of the Plant Growth Laboratory will be provided. 10 additional cycle parking spaces will be introduced in the form of a sheltered unit. The proposal is accompanied by vehicular tracking plans.

14.2 The application has been subject to formal consultation with Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Highways Authority and Transport Assessment Team, who raise no objection to the proposal.

14.3 It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the objectives of the Local Plan and is compliant with NPPF advice.

15. Amenity

Neighbouring properties

15.1 A number of neighbour objections concerned the trees to be planted within the replacement hedge along the Northern boundary of the site, impacting the amenity of properties along Bateman Mews with windows facing South. However, these trees have subsequently been removed from the proposal, and the proposed replacement hedge will be maintained at no more than 1.8 metres in height. It is thought that no other part of the proposal will impact amenity issues aside from the construction process itself; as a result, the Environmental Health officer has requested conditions pertaining to hours available for construction/demolition, and collections and deliveries.

15.2 Given the adjacent context, location, size, and design of the proposal it is unlikely to give rise to any significant amenity impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of daylight, enclosure or other environmental impacts. The proposal is compliant with policies 35, 50, 52, 53 and 58 of the Local Plan.

Summary

15.3 The proposed alterations to the access would ensure its viability for the foreseeable future for the Botanical Gardens, Sainsbury Lab and Plant Growth Lab. In addition, the proposed replacement hedge would improve the biodiversity of the area. The revised access arrangements have arisen from stakeholder engagement and the plans have been amended to address neighbour concerns.

15.4 No heritage or ecological harm arises from the revised proposal and the proposal adequately respects the amenity of its neighbours. Subject to conditions, the proposal is compliant with policies 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61

and 71 of the Local Plan. The associated construction and environmental impacts would be acceptable in accordance with policies 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the Local Plan.

- 15.5 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of 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 recommended for approval.

16. Recommendation

- 16.1 **Approve** subject to:

-The planning conditions as set out below with minor amendments to the conditions as drafted delegated to officers.

17. 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.

3. The proposed new hedge shall be regularly managed during the course of any one year at a retained height of no more 1.8m from ground level. All new lighting shall be in the form of downward facing lighting bollards no higher than 1.5m from ground level.

Reason: In order to safeguard residential amenity (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 55, 56, 59)

4. All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained within the Ecological Walkover (Nicholsons, May 2025).

Reason: In order to protect ecology (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 59 and 70)

5. All approved landscaping shall be fully carried out in accordance with the approved plans in the first planting season following the removal of the existing hedge or in accordance with an alternative phasing plan for provision.

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate and timely re-provision of landscaping (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55, 56, 59)

6. No construction or demolition work shall be carried out and no plant or power operated machinery operated other than between the following hours: 0800 hours and 1800 hours on Monday to Friday, 0800 hours and 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless alternative hours are otherwise previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the adjoining properties. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 35)

7. Statutory BNG condition

Informatives:

1. Nesting birds - The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act.
2. Bats - Works should proceed with caution and in the event of bats or evidence of them being found, work must stop immediately and advice taken on how to proceed lawfully from one of the following: a bat consultant, the UK Bat Helpline: 0845 1300228, Natural England: 0300 0603900, or the Cambridgeshire Bat Group www.cambsbatgroup.org.uk

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

