

2 September Planning Speaker Statements

#5 - 25/04382/FUL Market Square - Trustees of CUCA

About Fisher House, Guildhall Street. I am writing on behalf of the Trustees of the Cambridge University Catholic Association (CUCA) which owns Fisher House. This listed building supports an international community of students, senior University Members, regular visitors and guests who come together every day for Mass and, by several hundred people, for Masses for most of Sunday morning and again in the late afternoon (and may be used in the late afternoon on Saturdays). The building is also used every day by students to meet and also to study in the Library. There are events most evenings in term often including speakers and discussion. It is also a residential space as the home of 2-3 of the chaplains. Some congregants have accessibility issues and there is no protected drop off space; we also have difficulty obtaining temporary parking for contractors who are vital to maintain our listed building. Also the footpaths outside and from the market square are very cramped and filled with bike and scooter parking.

General Views. Refurbishment of the Market Square area is needed and we are supportive of improvements. The square has been a source of vitality since the proposal to turn it into a car park was withdrawn many decades ago. It is important to carefully consider new proposals for this area, and get them right. Our main concerns follow.

1. The outdoor event space that would use demountable stalls. We have understood that this space is for civic events in the centre, different in nature from spaces like Parkers Piece or Midsummer Common. However, the possibility for noisy (strongly amplified music) crowded events potentially from 7am to 11pm every day in the southern part of the site closest to Fisher House is a major concern. We are already burdened with noise from the Kiki night club, though this is (mostly) relatively controlled thanks to cooperation of the owners. The house shakes however.

We ask the committee to consider carefully whether the officers' view in 23.15 is made out – the proposal is admitted to have “some unresolved issues” and be “finely balanced”, which is not overwhelming; the justification does not include a public entertainment space. Big noisy events will cut across many established uses of Fisher House. If this is to go ahead we would strongly represent:

1. Fisher House pre-dates the surrounding development of Lion Yard and the Grand Arcade. Its prior uses should be respected, as a residential, student and worship space which is heavily used.
2. The Environmental Protection Officer notes (in 6.35) that that “there are a number of nearby residential and non-residential noise sensitive receptors. It will be necessary to ensure that unacceptable significant adverse impacts on health and amenity do not arise.”
3. Have the police been consulted on issues that arise with new uses, uncontrolled crowding, and layouts?

We ask for these modifications:

- 1.1 CUCA and the Fisher House chaplain to be consulted on management of all events before they occur and given a hotline for noise, vibration, crowd management and/or public order issues.
- 1.2 No events permitted before 12.30 pm or after 5pm on a Sunday
- 1.3 No events or preparation should begin before 9am
- 1.4 No events shall continue after 10pm on other days.
- 1.5 Noise level requirements should respect residential and other users of Fisher House.

2. The street and turning area in front of Fisher House. The proposals impact on the current use of this area, since it is to be shortened, and the bike racks moved further towards Fisher House.

2.1. We would rather that this turning area is not shortened, to allow a protected drop off point for Fisher House (bearing in mind the accepted need in 6.64. for a drop off for the Premier Inn)

2.2. Pavement access from the market to Fisher House is already difficult to navigate, especially for people with reduced mobility, given the general crowding of bikes, scooters and mopeds around, but not attached to, the bike stands. At face value the new bike parking area appears to have more space around it on the plans, but this is deceptive, since the current walking space past the Sushi bar at the corner of Petty Cury, underneath the 1st-floor overhang, isn't clearly included on the plans. In the new location this is lost, making this walking route even harder to navigate. We ask that the bike racks remain in their current location – or if moved that they have at least as much space around them at ground level (i.e. including space under overhangs), and for enforcement to avoid a clutter of scooters and mopeds around them.

#8 - 25/04484/FUL 87-93 Oxford Road and Fitzwilliam College Sportsground – Antoinette Nestor (Castle Ward Councillor)

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to residents' concerns about the locations of the proposed changing rooms and their impacts on established biodiversity and residential amenity. There is also a very serious concern about rugby player safety.

Residents have shown these impacts could be avoided by swapping the sites for the proposed changing rooms and the proposed squash court.

The proposed changing and plant rooms would be squeezed into a narrow strip of land between the boundary with existing homes (numbers 95 to 109 Oxford Road) and the cricket and rugby pitch boundary lines. This would lead to the following harm:

The rear elevation would be 70 cm from the boundary with the existing homes.

- The existing mature hedge which is used by nesting and roosting birds would be destroyed. This would be contrary to the first principle of the BNG hierarchy which is to protect existing natural assets and would harm existing residential amenity,
- 7.5m high scaffolding posts with permanent ball stop netting between them would be erected. The minimum recommended height of security fencing for prisons is just 5.2m. This would also harm residential amenity.

The front elevation would be on the edge of a 3m runoff from the rugby pitch.

Player welfare is World Rugby's number one priority.

World Rugby pitch safety guidelines in respect of perimeter run off areas, state 'clear surrounding areas should be ideally 5 m wide, with absolute minimum of 3.5m for men's games and 3m for women's games.' The latter being the subject of a satisfactory risk assessment and padding around obstacles in the run off area.

Turning to perimeter hazards, the guidelines insist solid perimeter fences or hoardings must stay a safe distance away and with fences appropriately padded.

The proposal fails to meet these guidelines on three counts:

- i) A proposed 3m run off against an absolute minimum of 3.5m
- ii) A proposed brick wall along the edge of the 3m run off against guidance for solid features to be 'a safe distance away' with appropriate padding
- iii) Absence of a risk assessment required for an absolute minimum 3.5m run off.

As shown in the residents' proposal, by swapping the sites for the changing rooms with the proposed squash courts, the hedge could be retained in compliance with the BNG hierarchy, residents' amenity safeguard and rugby player safety protected.

This is the first development on the playing fields for 99 years, I ask the Committee to promote a better planning outcome for the next 99 years by refusing this planning application and inviting an amended version as requested by residents.

The Committee could justify refusing this planning application on the following strong Local Plan policy grounds:

Policy 55: Responding to Context: Failure to respond positively to the development context

Policy 56: Creating Successful Places: Failure to design a development that is safe

Policy 57: Designing New Buildings: Failure to demonstrate the new building will have a positive impact on its setting and failure to maintain biodiversity.

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**#8 - 25/04484/FUL 87-93 Oxford Road and Fitzwilliam College
Sportsground – Local Resident**

I'm a resident in Oxford Road and strongly oppose the current planning proposed of student accommodation on Fitzwilliam playing fields . The proposed accommodation is not in keeping with current housing on the street. And is too big an increase on what is primarily a resident street.

I have great concerns over the disruption to the quiet nature of the street, and what the intention is during the summer months when students of the university vacate and the accommodation is let out to visiting students who already cause a nuisance with noise at night. It seems ludicrous that a proposal for such a dramatic demolition and re - development of this size can be acceptable when other accommodation and housing on the street is subject to strict limits due to being in a conservation area.

The volume and speed of traffic increased by development of Eddington and Darwin Green means this road is increasingly unsafe for pedestrians as is , I would have great concerns over the safety of student especially as walking and cycling would primarily be mode of transport.

Would fitzwilliam support the closure of the road to stop Oxford Road being used as a rat run ? If so I might be more inclined to support an application that is more reasonable for all party's.

I should very much appreciate my thoughts and objections be noted. And any further planning be disclosed.