

City Delegation meeting 3rd February 2026

Minutes

- Time: 11am to 12:30pm
- Meeting held: via Teams 22

Attendees: Martin Smart (Chair of Planning Committee), Katie Thornburrow (Vice-Chair of Planning Committee, Toby Williams (Delivery Manager), Melissa Reynolds, Tom Chenery.

Main issues to consider:

- Relevant material planning considerations raising significant planning concerns
- Significant implications for adopted policy
- The nature, scale and complexity of the proposed development
- Planning history
- Degree of public involvement

Development

25/03901/FUL – Land RO 31 Neale Close Cherry Hinton

Erection of 1 No. dwelling

Reason for Inclusion

Number of objections

17 objections - parking, highways, overdevelopment, amenity, drainage, biodiversity, incomplete plans / missing details

Discussion

The case officer Melissa Reynolds presented the item, including its immediate context, internal and external layout, design and impact on adjacent properties. The proposal was for a modest 3 bed family house and had attracted 18 objections on the grounds of: overdevelopment, character, amenity, parking and highway safety, construction impacts, amenity re future occupiers and loss of garden tree. The Officer advised that their minded-to recommendation was of refusal.

In consideration of the main issues, it was noted that the scheme did not raise any significant planning concerns, that there was no complex planning history on the site and there was no significant implication for adopted policy. A significant number of third-party representations had been received, but the public interest in the scheme aligned with the minded-to officer recommendation. On this basis, it was agreed by

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the Panel that there was no public interest in bringing the application to planning committee.

Decision

Do not refer to Planning Committee

Development

25/04832/FUL – Wolfson Court Newnham (Tom Chenery)

Demolition of existing and construction of replacement purpose-built student accommodation, ancillary facilities, landscaping and new pedestrian access.

Reason for Inclusion

Ward member requested, Cllrs Gough and Rees.

Summary issues raised: Traffic; impact on cycle network; impacts during construction; impact on the character of the area and heritage; sustainability concerns; environmental health impacts (noise and vibration); supervision of students; external consultation.

Cllr Dr Peter Rees (in written submission for call-in) stated:

- **Loss of amenity from occupancy arrangements:** The proposed increase in rooms (from 145 to 408) would bring a substantial rise in noise and disturbance. Because undergraduates and many Masters students leave after June, a large proportion of rooms could be occupied year-round by temporary incumbents or conference attendees etc, as is already common practice for this developer's other nearby premises, with poorly defined limits on visitor occupancy and profit incentives likely to worsen amenity impacts. Restricting occupancy to students requiring full-year residence (e.g. PhDs and full-year Masters) would significantly reduce these harms and be preferable to the proposal.
- **Risk to cyclist safety during construction:** Routing demolition and construction lorries along Clarkson Road poses a serious safety risk. Clarkson is very narrow and heavily used by cyclists (with recent counts showing far higher cycle use than Madingley Road), and this approach would contradict the established precedent of prohibiting construction traffic on Clarkson, as applied at the Maths Centre.
- **Risk of structural damage to neighbouring homes:** The site's unusual gault clay ground conditions mean heavy plant, driven piling, vibration and dynamic compaction could damage nearby properties. Although an outline commitment is now made to avoid certain techniques, alternatives are

unspecified, and proposed vibration thresholds are generic national standards rather than tailored to the local geology.

- **Design not responsive to context:** The proposed height, massing and form are out of keeping with the surrounding area, which is predominantly low-rise and domestic in scale, and compares poorly with more context-sensitive nearby developments.
- **Unconvincing case for demolition:** The sustainability and viability case relies on a bespoke methodology agreed at pre-application stage that favours demolition and rebuild. This massively downplays the high upfront carbon, relies on per-room metrics which is potentially misleading, gives weight to financial return, and fails to properly test realistic re-use or hybrid options, despite added risks from demolition and conflict with emerging policy against unnecessary demolition. I am not convinced by the case for demolition.
- **Greenwashing and inconsistent carbon evidence:** The development is framed as environmentally friendly, yet this relies on selective metrics and long time horizons that extend well beyond 2050. Conflicting and inconsistent carbon data have been presented during consultations with public, raising concerns that the environmental credentials of the scheme are overstated.

Discussion

Presented by case officer Tom Chenery. 147 to 408 rooms in five buildings (A-E) single ensuite. New pedestrian access from Madingley Road. Site orientation, garage 15a, to be demolished, existing courtyard shown. Built form throughout site, five buildings, access from Clarkson Road, car parking reduced, school of Mathematics west of site, St John's Primary + residential, east and surrounding. Images shown of the properties, from Clarkson Rd and internally. Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shows access from Madingley Road for temporary purposes then exiting via Clarkson Road. Not detailed as part of application, has caused issues in representations received. Temporary access would need planning permission, and this was a process point with the applicants. CEMP would be conditioned. Called in by Cllr Rees, summarised points. Other reps = 5 objections. Consultation still open because the address of the site had been amended. 7 weeks into consultation period. Third party issues around intensification, student behaviour, sustainability (demolition), access construction, trees, noise and vibration, pollution from consultation, damage to properties.

Cllr Rees addressed the Panel: Proposal not just for students, triple no. of rooms than present, commercially driven proposition, out of term-time use impacts including conferencing for commercial companies etc, would want any permission to restrict occupation to 4-year residence term by students only or less. Cycling risks, damage to properties, digging technique, can cause damage given gault clay profile, design The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is a strategic partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

not responsive, height and massing not in keeping, case for demolition not convincing, retrofit for renovation less commercial, not convinced environmental sustainability bottomed out.

Cllr Clough echoed Cllr Rees call-in reasons and in addition raised issues of flooding, transport plan not being comprehensive, cycle traffic impacts on Clarkson Road. Key cycling route from Eddington. Protected species and BNG issues had also been raised by third parties.

The Panel agreed that relevant material planning considerations had been raised which included significant planning concerns and that the nature of use could give rise to significant implications for adopted policy. Additionally, the scheme - a major application - was of a scale and complexity to warrant committee consideration. Issues around out of term-time use, freeing up of off-site accommodation and nature of future occupants would need careful consideration.

Decision

Refer to Planning Committee

Development

25/05050/FUL – 80 and 82 Lovell Road Kings Hedges (Melissa Reynolds)

Demolition of an existing commercial greenhouse, erection of a 1.5 storey, four-bedroom self-build dwelling together with 2 No. new parking spaces for the proposed dwelling (with EV charging), Repurposing of shared private drive between 80 and 82 Lovell Road, New vehicle turning head enabling forward-gear exit, Relocated entrances for 80 and 82 Lovell Road to the front of the properties, New dropped kerb for 82 Lovell Road driveway, Retention of one parking space each for 80 and 82 Lovell Road (accessed from Lovell Road) and Planting a new line of trees to improve shielding of views of the Science Park together with Enhanced landscaping including native hedgerows, addition of biodiversity enhancements, including provision for protected species.

Reason for Inclusion

Ward member requested (Cllr Jenny Gawthrope). Issues raised include:

- Public interest
- Development of back-land
- Issues regarding access and vehicles to the new development and the narrowness of entry/exit (between the existing semi-detached houses 80 and 82) combined with the narrowness and parking in Lovell Road
- Changes to the design of existing houses, removal of oriel windows, access and loss of existing amenity
- Management of any new build, parking and access and loss of existing residents' amenity.

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Discussion

Presented by the case officer Melissa Reynolds. Self-build proposal, 1.5 storeys. Impacts on 80 and 82 Lovell Road and further, internal plans and entrances needed to change. Greenhouse to the rear. The case officer advised that the officer position was an on-balance minded to recommendation of approval. Conditions being considered to remove a permitted change of use to House in Multiple Occupation and to require works to 80-82.

Cllr Gawthrope re-iterated her written submissions including significant public interest (28 objections, none in support), back-land development type, access issues around narrowness + visibility onto Lovell Road, design of existing housing, loss of oriel windows and management of construction process.

Cllr Gawthrope stated the land had a long history with the owner's intention to build on the site, semi-commercial greenhouse use previously, did not come through as a planning application. The garages to 80-82 would be removed. Some concern regarding the loss of amenity for existing houses either side.

The Panel members agreed that relevant material planning considerations had been raised which included significant planning concerns. This focused primarily on the access provisions, their safety and consequential impacts on adjacent properties. There had also been a significant degree of public interest in the planning application to warrant committee consideration and there was planning history on the site, that whilst not complex, together with the other planning issues and, in light of the officer minded-to position, pointed towards committee consideration.

Decision

Refer to Planning Committee