

University of Cambridge

West Cambridge Community Group

Minutes of the Meeting

4 July 2016 in the Hauser Forum Seminar Room on the West Cambridge site.

Attendees:

Harvey Bibby, Lansdowne Road resident (Chair)
Jon Elphick, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents' Association
Hugh Purser, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents' Association
Humphrey Gleave, North Newnham Residents' Association
Edward Byam Cook, Madingley Parish Council
Helen Bradbury, Coton Parish Council
Henry Day, Conduit Head Road resident
Angela Chadwyck-Healey, Madingley Road Residents Association
Rod Tipple, Madingley Road Residents' Association
Nicky Blanning, University Accommodation Service - West Cambridge Apartments
John Evans, Cambridge City Council
Matthew Danish, Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Tom Ridgman, Westnet & IFM

Heather Topel, University
Biky Wan, University
Prof Richard Phillips, Cavendish Laboratory
Tony Ling, Jestico + Whiles Architects
Luigi Scalera, University Estate Management
Peter Swallow, Grimshaw Architects
Brian Williams, University Estate Management

Apologies:

Simon Cornish, University Sports Centre
Hester Wells, Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Will Hudson, West Cambridge Safety Committee
Rod Cantrill, Cambridge City Councillor, Newnham Ward
Sue Davis, University Childcare Services

1. WELCOME

Harvey Bibby welcomed the group.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made and apologies presented.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

No comments were made to the minutes of the last meeting.

4. WEST CAMBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Heather Topel thanked the group for attending the meeting especially as Cambridge was undertaking a lot of consultation at present.

A major milestone was achieved recently as the application of the outline planning permission was submitted to the Cambridge City Council. The City Council are now undertaking formal consultation and comments can be made to the City Council via their online portal. If people require assistance or material then the team can be contacted to provide this to enable comments through this process. The University wants to promote the site as the premier site for physical sciences and technology and more information will be shared about the detail

of the priority projects this evening. For Phase One, the priority projects include the Cavendish III for the Department of Physics and the Civil Engineering building for the Department of Engineering, which over time will be relocated to the West Cambridge site. Other priority projects include shared facilities and commercial research for the site.

The planning application also includes future development. The nature of the outline planning application shows parameter plans and the team is happy to help residents to understand these technical documents. The outline plan includes sustainability, drainage, environmental and other strategies across the development. The formal consultation runs for an additional three weeks (confirmed by John Evans).

The planning application also includes travel planning including public transport, pedestrian and cycle connectivity. From 23 July 2016, the Universal bus (formerly the Uni 4) will be running with a series of improvements, including a connection to the railway station, with a University subsidy.

Q: Is the development for graduates and under-graduates? (Rod Tipple)

A: Yes. (Heather Topel)

Q: Are all the documents available online? (Jon Elphick)

A: Yes on the City Council portal. We are not aware of any documents that are missing or anything that is redacted due to sensitivities e.g. badger sett locations. (Heather Topel)

Q: Do you know how many people will use the site? (Rod Tipple)

A: 14,000 people will use the site in the future. There are currently approximately 4000 people based on the site. Commercial space is the opportunity to have more people occupy more space. (Heather Topel)

Q: How many parking places are you offering? (Rod Tipple)

A: 4390 car parking spaces are proposed in the plan. The first phase is less than what is consented in the current masterplan. (Heather Topel)

Q: At the local liaison forum meeting [for the City Deal meeting], you mentioned a bus hub on the site – could you point this out? (Helen Bradbury)

A: The liaison forum meeting outlined proposals for the City Deal. This planning application stands alone and doesn't rely on the City Deal. However, if the County Council assigns a City Deal bus route through the West Cambridge site, we have suggested a location for interchange. [For the A428] the route through the West Cambridge site is speculative as the University doesn't have information about the route from the County Council. The proposals might be for the bus route to come into the site on High Cross and for the interchange to be at the West Forum and then travel to the East Forum to pick up and drop off at the key employment sites. The University has provided infrastructure for the Western Orbital which will come from the North West Cambridge Development, along Eddington Avenue and we would like it to come down High Cross near to the West Forum. (Heather Topel)

Q: How does the bus leave the site [for the A428 proposal]? (Rod Tipple)

A: The University's site ends at the West Cambridge boundary. It is not within the University's gift to determine this and the County will determine where in the City it will go to as its final destination, which may affect where it leaves the site. (Heather Topel)

Q: Does the University support the Western Orbital? (Helen Bradbury)

A: Yes, the University supports that and has supported it through infrastructure. (Heather Topel)

Q: Can we have a transport meeting? (Harvey Bibby)

A: We can have another transport meeting about the West Cambridge proposals, however we do not know when City Deal will come about. The planning application includes standalone mitigation and travel planning measures. If you want to go to the City Deal briefing then you should speak to the County Council and attend their local liaison meetings. (Heather Topel)

Q: From your transport planning, if 60% would walk or cycle, 30% would drive and 10% would be another form, this would mean c8000 homes would be needed to be in the local area to support sustainable transport methods – could you comment on this? (Edward Byam Cook)

A: Yes, 30% driver share is right but I cannot recall from memory the breakdown of other forms of transport. In preparing the transport strategy, there is lots of postcode mapping and data to inform the travel planning so we know the patterns that exist currently. There are also homes on North West Cambridge Development, as well as the Darwin Green proposals which will in time provide a significant number of homes locally, in addition to others in the Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City. (Heather Topel)

5. DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS – PRESENTATION OF DETAILED DESIGNS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tony Ling from Jestico+Whiles and Prof Richard Phillips from the Cavendish Laboratory gave a presentation on the background and considerations for the new Cavendish III building which is in an early design stage.

Prof Richard Phillips gave the background from the Department of Physics' perspective. The existing Cavendish Laboratory is located at the south-east corner of the West Cambridge site and was one of the first developments when the site was identified as area of importance for science within the University. The Cavendish is a vibrant place with 900 staff permanently based there as well as 900 undergraduates. The majority of these people travel to site by bicycle. The department has suffered from recruitment at the administrative staff because of the housing affordability. The scheme will have generous cycle parking without it being visually obstructive. The department puts effort into engaging with local community members through the Science Festival and Physics at Work laboratory events. The Cavendish needs to move because it is in inadequate buildings constructed in the early 1970s using a cheap construction system developed for local authority schools. Environmentally the facilities are not good and require considerable expenditure on building maintenance. There is a big motivation to move into more efficient accommodation. The aim to achieve a high quality building that looks impressive, although not flamboyant, in a timeless way. The fact that the Cavendish is already located on the site should hopefully mean that the travel patterns should not change significantly.

Tony Ling outlined the background of the Cavendish buildings and that the existing buildings have no sense of collaborative working behind them. The intention is to have all of the disparate Cavendish buildings moved into one single entity. The timescales are: the planning application due for submission in May 2017 with construction start in early 2018 and completion in December 2020.

The team has also considered external influences. The Cavendish has a high technical specification particularly in relation to the control of noise and vibration from Madingley Road and JJ Thomson Avenue. There are central gardens within the masterplan south of the Cavendish building. There will be one single entrance to the building providing a single reception for all building users, staff, students, community. The parameter plans show that there will be different levels as it steps back from Madingley Road. There will be a higher feature in the building that may be located in the southern part of the site. There will be about 800 cycle spaces that will be incorporated into the site.

Key drivers of the design are to improve collaboration, to enable the science, and to maintain the identity of the Cavendish.

Q: Is there a vehicle junction onto Madingley Road? The avenue is distinctive. I would regret having a tradesman's entrance opposite Conduit Head Road – we would like to preserve your view as well as vice versa. (Henry Day)

A: Yes – there is a vehicle access proposed where the old Vet School access was located, which will provide service access to the Cavendish. The details of the junction and its use for turning are to be determined. We will preserve the nature of the road frontage and there will be screening for residents and building users. The existing trees will be preserved but there may be some changes. At this stage the design remains quite fluid. (Tony Ling)

Q: How heavy will the traffic be on this junction? (Rod Tipple)

A: It is early to determine the numbers (Tony Ling) though these deliveries are currently provided through the JJ Thomson junction. There are currently about half a dozen deliveries per day from DHL and nothing like the traffic from Madingley Road. There will be some enhanced traffic along JJ Thomson. There is also liquid nitrogen that is delivered. The likely traffic junction information can be given at a future time. (Richard Phillips)

Q: Have you got plans about the M&E equipment relative to noise and height, such as gas canisters and tanks? We want to keep the visual and height impacts away from residents. (Harvey Bibby)

A: Each building will have M&E component. This building will be served by a small energy centre located in the north west corner of the site. (Heather Topel). External plant will be coordinated into the building, unlike the existing Cavendish building which have visually incoherent plant added as they have developed good over time. All the plant will be contained within the height limits set by the parameter plans but there would be some risers and chimneys that could be seen from a distance. (Tony Ling)

Q: Could you tell us about the height? Is the set back a feature across the site (Jon Elphick)

A: The general level of the site is around 19m A.O.D. (above ordnance datum) and the new buildings will be within an envelope of 41m A.O.D – this is reduced to to 37m A.O.D set back 50m from the green buffer along Madingley Road and increased to 49m A.O.D at the south-east corner of the site to provide an accent feature. The service yard is within the site and should not be visible from Madingley Road. (Heather Topel)

Q: What is the confidence level for your project construction to start in early 2018 and for the Vet school to move (Hugh Purser)

A: The first proposals do not rely on the Vet School moving. Until relocation, the Vet School will more intensively graze the West paddocks. Of course the programme is contingent on planning. (Heather Topel)

Q: When will the building become operational? (Hugh Purser)

A: We envisage that it will take one year to relocate and have facilities running with a phased move of current buildings into the new facility completed by the end 2021. (Richard Phillips)

Q: Does this mean that the demolition of the Cavendish will not take place before June 2021? (Hugh Purser)

A: We might allow more contingency on those timescales. More information about the demolition of Cavendish II will come about when the longer term proposals for the Engineering Department are programmed. (Heather Topel/Richard Phillips). On timescales and certainty, the University is reliant on funding to enable these timescales to be achieved. (Richard Phillips)

Q: Will the University be affected by Brexit? (Hugh Purser)

A: We are not yet in a position to answer this complex issue though it is being considered fully by the University. (Heather Topel)

Q: New junctions are always a concern and we want them to be safe for everyone. For cycle parking, we want it to be accessible for all types of bikes and users so please consult with us on detail. (Matthew Danish)

A: We are keen to make cycle parking appropriate as well – thank you for the offer. (Richard Phillips)

6. DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING – PRESENTATION OF DETAILED DESIGNS AND DISCUSSIONS

Brian Williams from Estate Management and Peter Swallow from Grimshaw Architects presented the scheme for the civil engineering building for the Department of Engineering and the 'inset masterplan' proposals. When the Cavendish expressed an interest to move, this allowed Engineering the opportunity to integrate its department on the West Cambridge site.

Peter Swallow explained that funding was in place to deliver the civil engineering building early on, and that the building would grow with the evolving masterplan. The Department of Engineering is currently based at Fen Causeway in Cambridge. These facilities are woefully inadequate, which is feedback from students and staff. The Department now want to bring its operations into a single facility.

The Department is already on the West Cambridge site with IfM, the Whittle laboratory, Nano Science and Graphene there. The idea would see the buildings being developed into a single campus, linked by hub buildings that would unlock the potential, whilst building flexibility for the future.

The principles of the masterplan includes social cohesion - social spaces is key to stitching together existing buildings and future ones to create hub spaces for the future; and building connectivity within the scheme which is important and enables a public frontage. The facilities would be for staff and the public which runs north-south through the area. The site is 450m from the car park to the gardens at the south. The perimeter includes green bunds/protection along Madingley Road and Clerk Maxwell Road, and in the south water features will be incorporated as part of the development. The south will also include opening up of the entrance from the south east and pond.

The first focal point for visitors will include a strong hub. There is also a desire to link to the Cavendish. Pocket gardens is an idea that we want to add into the masterplan which will create breaks in the building rhythm. The buildings for heavy engineering will be located to the north of the site and the aspects that are more sensitive engineering are to the south. The main vehicle movements includes a hub point as well as a spur from Clerk Maxwell Road to service the Whittle Laboratory and connect to the routes. The eastern service route will be used infrequently.

The visualisations show the distinct character for the engineering building, but there is a family of spaces so that people will know they are in engineering department and can orientate around. There is a main north-south access which we are looking to fully pedestrianise. The site is currently surface car parking. The first phase is within the first square that grounds the engineering department. The development area is 14m above the surface car parking A.O.D. The main entrance is set back to give it the impression and impact as you enter the building. It is a national research building and the department wanted this visual connection. The first floor north-south access is on show and the public can look through to see the work of the departments.

The engineers have been on site to record and survey, as well as investigating impacts, in particular on noise. They found that there is no severe impact from the department operations and when the attenuation is put in

it comes in at less than current. The building won't work unless the department is happy with the activities. A box-in-box structure has been adopted to mitigate transfer of sound and air. Graphene and nano science have sensitive activities. There is predominately no mechanical plant for these buildings. It will maximise natural light and thermal mass. There will be louvres to manage the evening sunlight and these are built into the design for educational values and building physics.

Q: Where is the cycle path from Clerk Maxwell Road? (Matthew Danish)

A: There is a longer term plan for grade separate for pedestrians and cycles from Clerk Maxwell Road. We don't want to mix these journeys and there is space for lower undercroft cycle storage. (Peter Swallow)

Q: How many people will use the path? Adams Road is terrible for cyclists. (Rod Tipple)

A: The intention is for people to come from the south as well as the route from Clerk Maxwell Road – both of these options are in the masterplan depending on your destination. (Heather Topel)

Q: Have you considered the impact for cyclists along Clerk Maxwell Road? (Jon Elphick)

A: There is the grade separation and through the design we will need to navigate the cycle movements and understand the intermixing of cycles and vehicles. (Peter Swallow) There will not be cars mixing with cycles in the south part of the site. We are proposing car parking is removed on Clerk Maxwell Road with a dedicated cycle lane (Heather Topel).

Q: Is the Nano Science building staying? (Jon Elphick)

A: This will move as part of the masterplan.

Q: Is the narrowing of the bund in the north on Clerk Maxwell Road deliberate? (Jon Elphick)

A: The existing bund tapers towards the existing Park and Cycle and the diagram follows the existing treatment. (Peter Swallow)

Q: Is the service route near to the cycle route? (Hugh Purser)

A: We'll look at that service route - we foresee it to be infrequently used, not for day-to-day use – it is for vehicles such as large articulated ones that can't turn around on the site. One of the access points is existing. The other is lower down to the existing cycle way. The University will have to look at the management if this access route is infrequent so it does not become used in a way that was otherwise intended (Heather Topel).

Q: It would be helpful to know the height of Madingley Road so we know what that is relative to the buildings (Henry Day)

A: We can provide this. (Heather Topel)

Q: Please can you clarify the levels that you mentioned – can you provide this information for Clerk Maxwell Road? (Jon Elphick)

A: The levels on the plan indicate the maximum height above sea level. We can provide this from Clerk Maxwell Road as well as Madingley Road so you can see the relative maximum heights of buildings. (Heather Topel)

Q: What is the height of the current CAPE building? Presumably this building shouldn't be significantly bigger than on Clerk Maxwell Road? (Jon Elphick)

A: The Cape is slightly taller by 1 metre and it averages the same. There is a slight level difference along Clerk Maxwell Road. The trees provide screening at this time of year. The nearest house is 65m away. (Peter Swallow)

Q: Will you cover this noise information in the planning application? (Jon Elphick)

A: This won't be included in the outline planning application, but this will be in the detailed planning application for this building. (Heather Topel)

Q: Will you commit to the number of vehicles travelling down Clerk Maxwell Road? (Jon Elphick)

A: The information that we have is historic numbers and we will need to take a measure of how many vehicles will require access and the operation times (e.g. peak hours). We will do a full transport statement that comes along for this department. If there are few vehicles then the University will have to look at the management of this access point. (Heather Topel)

Q: When does construction commence? (Harvey Bibby)

A: Construction will commence in April 2017. Completion is due at the end of 2018-early 2019. The intention is for planning to be submitted in September. (Peter Swallow) This is a fully funded proposal. (Brian Williams)

Q: What is the classification of this building? (Harvey Bibby)

A: Academic office space. Students will stay at Trumpington Street. (Brian Williams)

Q: Is the current grade separation? (Matthew Danish)

A: This is as part of the inset masterplan. We've looked at the levels across the site and looked at the levels and now need to go through the detail. (Peter Swallow)

Q: One of the aims of City Deal is the reduce car usage. 4000 car parking spaces doesn't sound like it aligns to these aims to reduce car usage? (Rod Tipple)

A: The University is trying to be pragmatic in its approach the transport. The University will not provide parking if it isn't going to be used, but the levels proposed already include a reduction in car usage given the extent of growth planned on site. The number of car parking spaces reflects the spaces to academic employment at a 25% ratio; commercial ratio based at square meterage - that will start high and work downwards when public transport connections develop and improve over time. We are also looking at ways for people to get to the site including cycles, foot and buses, as well as improvements along the routes to the site such as along the Coton Path and Grange Road. (Heather Topel)

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be circulated.

The planning application is open for formal consultation for the next three weeks.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.