

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination

Statement for Matter CC1B: Open Space and Natural Environment

On behalf of Newnham College (ID. 5189)

- Representation numbers 26708, 26718, 28299, 28300

April 2016

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CAPL/324286/A6/MH



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1B.1iii Policy 67: Is the inclusion of the term “educational need” in the third paragraph of the policy overly restrictive? Is its inclusion necessary or should it be clearly defined? Should any definition include student accommodation?

- 1.1 This Pre-Hearing Statement has been prepared by Savills (UK) Limited on behalf of Newnham College to amplify its representations made in 2013 to the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2014.
- 1.2 Cambridge University is a collegiate institution. The Colleges within it are independent entities. Given the importance of the University of Cambridge to the local economy and general prosperity of Cambridge it is vital that the individual Colleges are allowed to grow and develop at their own pace to meet changing educational demands, student needs and simple changes of circumstance. Each College is different.
- 1.3 Policy 67 is fundamentally about protecting open spaces within the city. Whilst this is an accepted approach to control inappropriate new development, it is crucial that, given the constrained nature of the College’s site, this policy is not used to prevent legitimate development proposals from being implemented. The College campus is at the heart of College life. Therefore we consider that the inclusion of the term ‘educational need’ should not be necessary and that development within College grounds should be acceptable in principle. There is no need to define the types of development that would be acceptable within the policy.
- 1.4 However, if a definition is considered necessary by the Inspectors, then it should include or allow for student accommodation. As the Inspectors will be aware the Council is currently carrying out some work on the possible overall future level of student accommodation across Cambridge. Without wishing to pre-empt the outcome of that work, the very nature of the University of Cambridge is its Collegiate ethos. This means having student accommodation in close proximity to teaching staff and educational facilities. Allowing Colleges such as Newnham to develop their own student accommodation within their own grounds in an appropriate manner would also relieve pressure on the private housing market.

- 1.5 In conclusion on this matter, we consider that the terms 'demonstrable educational need' should be deleted from the policy or that student accommodation should be explicitly allowed for in the policy.

1B.2v Should the Newnham College Sites (AGS62, P&G40 and SPO33) be reviewed against the criteria for designation as POS in respect of the College's need to expand its current facilities?

- 2.1 The representations made on behalf of the College in September 2013 set out the options for development within the College grounds. These options are shown on the submitted masterplan with those representations and is included as an appendix to this Examination Statement. Since the representations to the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2014 were made, Newnham College has obtained planning permission for the redevelopment of the Strachey Building (ref: 15/2227/FUL). One of the reasons this location was chosen was because it would not fall foul of existing and proposed open space designations. All of the development options put forward with the 2013 representations were under consideration at that time and would remain so for any future development the College might require.
- 2.2 Without pre-empting the outcome of the work that is being carried out by Council in respect of possible demand for student accommodation, the College anticipates a significant growth in postgraduate students over the next few years and it is crucial that the College is able to adapt as required to meet these changing circumstances. As explained in the 2013 representations these proposed open space designations would severely restrict the future development options for the College.
- 2.3 We would strongly support a review of these open space designation proposals for a number of reasons. Firstly, these designations were based on work that was carried out five years ago and circumstances on the ground could have significantly changed since then. Secondly, planning permissions may have been granted that result in some of the designations either being irrelevant or redundant. Finally, the evidence was prepared pre-NPPF and therefore did not take into account the presumption in favour of sustainable development when considering these proposed designations.
- 2.4 The Pightle and Principal's Lodge (AGS62) would seem to be designated for amenity reasons. We do not think this is a necessary designation as it is essentially a private garden to this property. All of the Newnham College sites are within the West Cambridge Conservation Area and consequently already have a stringent element of control on them. There is simply no need to add another level of protection in policy terms. They also does not meet the criteria set out in Appendix I in terms of either environmental or recreational importance. For example, they do not make a major contribution to the setting of the city nor are they a green break in the urban framework. Equally, they do not do the same for the local area. They are also not enjoyed visually on a daily basis from public places.

- 2.5 Newnham College Gardens (P&G40) already form part of the setting of the listed Champney buildings and therefore already have a level of protection from this proximity to the listed buildings. The College Gardens are also essentially private and whilst they have environmental importance according to the criteria we believe sufficient protection is afforded via the conservation area designation and that they form part of the setting for the listed buildings. Therefore this open space designation is unnecessary.
- 2.6 SPO33 designates the Newnham College sports fields as protected open space. This designation is unnecessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, playing fields are protected by virtue of paragraph 74 of the NPPF. Secondly, this is the College's only recreational playing field. This proposed designation also includes the tennis courts for the College. Some of these courts are currently unplayable due to damage from roots of a tree which is not in the College's ownership and is subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Therefore we suggest that this designation is removed from this site.