

**Cambridge City Council
Design & Conservation Panel**

Notes of the meeting Wednesday 10th June 2015

Attendees:

Di Haigh	RIBA (Chair)
Terry Gilbert	RTPI (Vice Chair)
David Grech	Historic England
Ian Steen	Co-opted member
Jon Harris	Co-opted member
Carolyn Gohler	Cambridge PPF
Mart Barrass	RIBA
Helen Thompson	Landscape Institute (item 1)

Officers:

Matthew Paul	Cambridge City Council (item 1)
Jonathan Hurst	Cambridge City Council (item 1)
Glen Richardson	Cambridge City Council (item 2)
Tony Collins	Cambridge City Council
Bana Elzein	Cambridge City Council (item 2)
Christian Brady	Cambridge City Council (item 2)
Sheila Stones	Historic England (item 2)

Apologies – Chris Davis.

1. Presentation – Department of Chemistry, Union Road (pre-application)

2. Presentation – New Museums Site (North Range), Free School Lane (15/0777/FUL)

Creation of new student services centre, including demolition of existing examinations hall, north end of the Austin Building, Mond Building annexe and creation of a cut through the Old Cavendish Laboratory. Refurbishment of Old Cavendish, Rayleigh wing Arts School and Lecture Theatre creation of the landscape areas and associated works.

This follows previous presentations to the Panel in December 2014 (unanimous verdict RED) and in February this year (unanimous verdict AMBER on the Arts School façade and Mond Annex options.)

Presentation by Rab Bennett from Bennetts Associates Architects with Mike Osbourn also in attendance.

The Panel were informed that since last time, further studies had been undertaken in relation to the Mond Annex but that the option to retain was incompatible with the University's objectives for the site. Further daylight modelling had revealed the impact to be negligible.

The Panel's comments were as follows:

(Helen Thompson declared an interest and left the meeting).

- **New Exam Hall façade (with relocated portal entrance).**

The Panel welcome the re-use of the historic doors within the modern surround that effectively ties in with the wider site while embedding some memory into the building.

The blank panel above gives the portal a scale it doesn't currently have, although an inscription here could give the new building a pleasing focal point.

- **Landscaping foreground.**

High quality landscaping is needed to lead directly to this new entrance. With its generous south-facing doors, the area beyond needs to be able to properly accommodate student spill-out during the warmer months as well as conference delegates.

- **Arts School**

- Visible plant room. The Panel expressed some concern regarding the lift over-run visible above the skyline from Peas Hill. This was regarded as an intrusion in this part of the city and should be minimised as far as possible. If its height cannot be lowered, the Panel would suggest a lighter grey finish is used for the cladding instead of the proposed bronze colour.
- Window sills and skirting. The Panel would urge that appropriate measures are taken to minimise weathering and rainwater staining.
- Palette of interior colours. There is potential here to find an appropriate palette of colours to bring the interior spaces to life and distinguish between the older building and its refurbished elements.
- The point where the corridors reach the atrium space is not only a source of light but an arrival point that could be celebrated.

- **Mond Annex.**

The Panel appreciates the need to have views through to the David Attenborough Building. They were informed that its removal would also be needed for construction access. The space would be transformed by landscaping as part of the longer term strategy. The Panel felt that views revealing the Mond rotunda would be beneficial.

- **Double archway through the Cavendish Laboratory.**

The Panel were comfortable with this double arched access, although the relationship between the lintels and the brickwork on the inner elevation was regarded as curious.

Conclusion

The Panel felt this was a satisfactory conclusion to the first of many chapters in the transformation of the New Museums Site. The architects have brought a degree of sophistication and elegance to upgrading the existing Arts School building and inserting a new development. Providing the landscaping is of a sufficiently high standard, the changes proposed will improve the environment.

VERDICT – GREEN (6) AMBER (1)

3. Notes of the last meeting – Wednesday 6TH May 2015

Agreed.

4. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 8th July 2015

Reminder:

'traffic light' definitions:

GREEN: a good scheme, or one that is acceptable subject to minor improvements.

AMBER: in need of significant improvements to make it acceptable, but not a matter of starting from scratch.

RED: the scheme is fundamentally flawed and a fresh start is needed.