

1 March 2021 response to

Greater Cambridge Local Plan site survey (parishes and RAs)

Site URN 127: Land at Granham's Road, Cambridge

Would you like to tell us anything about site accessibility and transport links?

Primary vehicular access would be on to Babraham Rd, which was already at a standstill during peak hours pre-pandemic (and likely to be worse post-lockdowns), and that is before the development of GB1 & 2. In his submission, John Mason claims that residential development to the north could be accessed via Urwin Gardens. There is no question of this. The cul-de-sac on Urwin Gdns was neither intended nor designed for through traffic: it ends in a pedestrian/cycle access on to the heavily-used cycle and footpath between Babraham Rd and the Biomedical Campus.

Would you like to tell us anything about site constraints or opportunities regarding development, such as flood risk, noise, air pollution or light pollution?

(a) The submission acknowledges that the central area of the site is in Flood Zone 3. This winter, that area has been continuously flooded for over 2 months (photographic evidence is available). The surrounding ditch network has not even been able to drain the Ninewells development, which has been suffering from flooding for over 3 months. Groundwater in the proposed site area is likely to be between 1 and 3m below ground, which is impervious clay over chalk, and ground-infiltrating SUDS systems are not possible (ref: Geoenvironmental studies conducted for application 13/1786/REM).

(b) Light pollution would have a detrimental effect on surrounding hedgerows which provide habitat for diverse fauna, including bats, rabbits, badgers and birds. These hedgerows are listed as a city wildlife site in the *Cambridge City Nature Conservation Strategy*, and are an important biodiversity corridor.

(c) The vicinity of the Addenbrooke's hospital helipad means that the site is currently an important approach corridor for helicopter traffic. Development of this site would require significant diversion of approaches from the East (the overwhelming majority of landings), with the consequent noise pollution impacting both wildlife and public enjoyment in the Gog Magog hills.

Would you like to tell us anything about landscape, townscape or heritage opportunities or constraints?

(a) *Cambridge Local Plan 2018* Policy 18 f: "respect key views, especially to and from the Chalk Hills and create an attractive landscape edge along the southern boundary of the Bell School site"; and Policy 18g: "create a distinctive gateway to the city and a high quality urban edge as approached by road from the south and respect key views." Development on this site would directly contradict this Policy.

(b) *Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2020)* Issues: "Development is eroding the areas of best landscape, from the south-east to south side of the city and in particular the views and chalk downland round the Gogs and the green space between the Biomedical Campus and Nine Wells Nature Reserve." *Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)* 4.7.1: "... The corridors of green space allow the City to be viewed in its landscape from a number of key approaches. The Cambridge Green Belt seeks to protect and enhance this very special setting for future generations." It goes on to highlight the view of the city in its landscape from the highest local points within the

Gog Magog Hills. Development of this grade 2 agricultural land which forms the northern fringe of the existing greenbelt would impinge on this view.

(c) *Cambridge & Peterborough Structure Plan Policy 9/2b*: "... will ensure the protection of green corridors running from open countryside into the urban area as generally indicated on the Key Diagram"; and "... will maintain views of the historic core"

Would you like to tell us anything about green infrastructure opportunities or constraints?

(a) All the footpaths around this site have been subjected to extremely heavy use during the last year, as has Nine Wells LNR. There is already insufficient area for existing residents to walk locally (on increasingly over-used paths between hedgerows and cultivated fields); further development would only serve to dramatically increase the pressure on, and cause degradation of, wildlife habitats. A walk within a development, with its limited open spaces, does not provide the same sense of wellbeing or exercise as walking on the edge of open countryside, with its associated views.

(b) *Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 18* states at 3.64 (about the Ninewells development): "Opportunities should be taken to enhance amenity and biodiversity in the associated Green Belt land and access to this and the open countryside beyond. Key features to be taken into account include Hobson's Brook and other features important for biodiversity, existing trees, and the sensitive transition between the urban fringe and the open countryside."

(c) Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2020)

- Theme 2, Biodiversity and Geodiversity Opportunities: "Strategic Gogs Green Belt farmland with views of the city - if not to be developed this area could be part of a longer term plan to create a beautiful green wildflower meadows corridor, all the way from the heart of Cambridge up to Magog Down. Such a strategy would preserve the views and green spaces of this beautiful Cambridge city approach ... as a breath of fresh [air]. It would also enhance people's experience of nature next to Addenbrookes Hospital and would correlate with the Hobsons Conduit Trust's plans for an enlarged Nine Wells Nature Reserve."
- Identifying broad opportunity zones, 6.23 1e: "Key opportunity to expand high-quality GI to help accommodate growth and absorb recreational pressure, enhancing existing landscape features within the fringes of south Cambridge towards the Gog Magog Hills."

Not included in the response as the limit was 2,000 characters:

(d) *Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 5.4.2*: "Areas of calcareous grassland have become fragmented and need to be expanded and linked together in order to produce sustainable blocks of habitat." This area is part of an important biodiversity corridor (diagram p114). The hedgerow bordering the current extent of development is listed as a city wildlife site in the *Cambridge City Nature Conservation Strategy*. Currently this is joined to the Nine Wells LNR by a mixture of grade 2 and grade 3 agricultural land. Any development between these sites will reduce this green connectivity and this is a serious constraint for this site. Note that both the *Cambridge Local Plan* and the *South Cambs Local Plan* currently safeguard grade 2 and 3a agricultural land.

Are there any other opportunities or constraints you would like to highlight, regarding suitability, availability or deliverability of the site?

This is a greenfield site, and is in the Cambridge Green Belt. Why was it not submitted, and subsequently classified, as a 'Green' site?