

13 December 2021

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan team
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Ref: BRYC3002

Dear Sir / Madam

GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN

S/OA/CH OPPORTUNITY AREAS SHIRE HALL/CASTLE PARK CAMBRIDGE

I write on behalf of Brydell Partners (BPS2 Varsity 3 Limited), the owners of Castle Park to submit representations to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan – First Proposals.

The identification of Castle Park as part of an Opportunity Area is welcomed. This recognises that Castle Park is in a sustainable location ideally placed in the City to support mixed use development. There is significant scope not only for redevelopment but to improve and expand the existing business accommodation and associated facilities as well as enhancement of the amenity provision, external spaces and public realm.

The text only references Shire Hall and the Castle Mound and their heritage importance. Clearly the OA covers a much wider area. Castle Park is included within the OA and it should be recognised that there are considerable differences in scale, character and appearance as well as the range of uses across the OA as identified in the Castle and Victoria Road Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2012).

Castle Mound dominates the southern end of the OA. Shire Hall and the Octagon formerly in civic use are under consideration for a range of residential, leisure and commercial uses and Castle Inn is occupied as student accommodation. These buildings take up much of the central area.

A terrace of small scale properties front Castle Street. These are occupied variously for residential, retail and food and drink.

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The heritage significance of Castle Mound as a scheduled ancient monument, and the listed building status of Shire Hall and some of the properties on Castle Street will be of considerable importance in shaping future development in this part of the OA.

In contrast in the northern part of the OA is primarily given over to the Castle Park business park complex. This comprises nine modern buildings largely of a similar scale and design built in 1990s together with a city council owned car park.

It is acknowledged that setting out guiding principles for development as a whole is appropriate but there are different design challenges across the OA.

The land within the OA is in multiple ownerships including Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council and Brydell Partners as well as other developer interests now and in the future. That the Council seek to guide development in the OA is understandable but such policy must include flexibility if the Council is to achieve the aim of delivering improvements to the character and identity of places.

The policy approach should allow for early delivery of improvements and enhancements of buildings and spaces, as well as redevelopment, to be brought forward in different parts of the OA on different timescales without being dependent upon aspirations and progress elsewhere within the OA.

Development management policies will ensure development is appropriate for the location and context and this can be highlighted in policy. The policy can also ensure that development in one site does not prejudice development being brought forward on another site in the OA.

In addition the policy should be looking for opportunities and encourage a creative approach to reinforcing and enhancing identity and sense of place.

At Castle Park a sustainable approach means making the best use of the existing buildings and infrastructure and enhancing this through a considered approach to future development. The focus will be on creating a sustainable working environment.

This encompasses internal and external spaces which are of a high quality in design, which function well and provide an attractive and healthy working environment. Changing working practices, a focus on sustainable living and increasing demand for attractive and useful outdoor spaces in towns means that the provision of complementary amenities and facilities and a high quality public realm will be an integral part of the future working environment.

Brydell Partners as owners of Castle Park are keen move forward quickly intending to focus on re-purposing, re-use, refurbishment and extension to existing buildings and external spaces.

It is vital that in order for development to come forward in the OA in a timely manner from early in the Plan period and that this is not prevented from happening by overly restrictive policy.

Brydell Partners are keen to be involved in the shaping of policy and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with the Greater Cambridge Local Plan team.

Yours faithfully



Jenny Page

Director

