# HELAA site: 40111 - Parkside Subdivisional Police Headquarters, Parkside, Cambridge

Cambridgeshire Constabulary have instructed Savills (UK) Ltd to make representations to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan (First Proposals). Savills have acted on behalf of the Constabulary in previous discussions and meetings with officers in respect of the police station at Parkside and also on the new station site at Milton.

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan is the first Joint Local Plan covering both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The symbiotic relationship between the two administrative areas is clear since many residents of South Cambridgeshire look to the City for their employment, retail, leisure and entertainment needs and consequently the preparation of a Joint Plan is logical. The plan will necessarily have to consider how to plan for the level of growth needed and where it should go. Such elements are key components of the plan period up to 2041 and Cambridgeshire Constabulary is keen to ensure that the police service is an important part of this strategy.  
The publication of the First Proposals consultation document seeks feedback on the emerging development strategy, the policy direction and the broad issues that the Councils need to address as they formulate the necessary policies. It is in this context that the Constabulary are making comments on the content of the document as it relates to the police station site at Parkside.  
  
The current adopted Local Plan 2018 allocates the Parkside police station site (0.5 hectares) for 50 dwellings at a density of 102 dwellings per hectare. The allocation was carried forward from the previously adopted Local Plan of 2006.  
The Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals which is now out for consultation seeks to continue with the same allocation on the same site. Page 71 of the document identifies the housing allocation alongside a number of other housing allocations that are being taken forward in this new plan. It notes  
“S/C/M4; Police Station, Parkside – the Building of Local Interest must be retained as part of the proposals for the redevelopment of the site for new houses”  
A plan of the site is shown on page 334 of the document.  
The Council will be aware that planning permission was granted in March 2019 for a new police station adjacent to the Milton Park and Ride site.  
  
The new building will include  
• Enhanced facilities enabling the Constabulary to respond to, and investigate, complex crimes such as fraud and online investigations more effectively  
• Enhanced facilities allowing for the increased use of virtual courts which reduces the need for travel to courts  
• Increase in cell provision from 12 to 24 to help meet future need  
• The facilities and ability to better meet demand as population growth continues  
• Better road access, subject to less traffic, enabling officers to respond to calls for service more efficiently.  
  
Having regard to the permission granted for the new station at Milton, it will be essential for the Constabulary to consider the future of the existing police station at Parkside. The property occupies a site area of approximately 0.5 hectares bounded by Parkside, Warkworth Terrace, Warkworth Lodge and the Cambridge Fire Station and associated housing. The four storey L-shaped property dates from the early 1970’s and provides approximately 3995 square metres of accommodation. The site also accommodates a multi storey car park for 99 cars and a further building, originally designed as a gymnasium, and now used for storage.  
  
The site is located within the Kite Conservation Area designated in 1969, extended in 1993 and 1997 and allocated as a separate Conservation Area in November 2018. The Kite Conservation Area Appraisal identifies Parkside as a Building of Local Interest, commenting that the property is “a good relatively unaltered example of its type”.  
As stated above, the policy intending to be rolled forward into this new Local Plan would appear to continue the presumption in favour of retaining the Building of Local Interest (BLI). The building’s BLI status is a matter of fundamental concern as far as the client project team is concerned and we will continue to question its designation. Discussions have taken place with officers back in 2019 regarding the development potential of the site, recognising that the reference to 50 dwellings on the site was only an initial indication of capacity. It was accepted that further design work would need to be undertaken in the context where officers acknowledge the very prominent nature of the site and its surroundings.  
  
Whilst the Constabulary Project Team welcomes the recognition that the site has development potential, it is important to ensure that the site can bring forward a mix of uses which the current Local Plan wording will not permit. At present the site is allocated purely for residential use. It is our view and indeed shared with officers that a more mixed use would be preferable on this site to reflect its central and prominent location. In the context of a mixed use, it is considered that there is potential for a boutique style hotel, apart hotel or office in this location alongside residential development and which would need to be carefully designed having regard to this sensitive location and the very prominent frontage it possesses overlooking Parkers Piece. It is important in this context to acknowledge that the police car park building to the rear of the site, the square and the store/former gym do not share any of the characteristics of the main building and do not constitute part of the Building of Local Interest designation or contribute to the Conservation Area. Consequently these elements should be the subject of demolition as part of any new development coming forward on the site. Clearly it will be a significant challenge to provide modern 21st Century accommodation in a purpose-built 1970’s police station and part of that assessment will necessarily involve a condition survey including a structural survey to assess the implications for a re-use (eg. cost of adaption and conversion). Indeed the designation of the police station as a BLI continues to be questioned by our client and the project team given the fundamental objections we have to its BLI status. We will continue to question the relevance of such a constraint to the redevelopment of this site as part of the ongoing strategy of bringing this site forward for development.  
  
It is the case that the site will need redevelopment on the basis of the planning permission granted at Milton. The opportunity for the Council to fully exploit this central, prominent site should not be lost and not be constrained by the wording within the existing Local Plan. Accepting that we are still at the early stage of Local Plan preparation, the Constabulary wishes to promote a more mixed use on the site rather than restricting this to residential use. As such we would suggest a new policy relating to the Parkside police station site which more fully acknowledges the opportunity that exists for a mixed use and should be reflected within any new Plan.