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Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
 South Cambridgeshire Hall
 Cambourne Business Park
 Cambourne
 Cambridge
 CB23 6EA

GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN SITE SUBMISSIONS UPDATE 2025: THE GRAFTON CENTRE

Introduction

As part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Site Submissions Update, a request has been made for information regarding material changes to existing site submission.

The following representation are submitted on behalf of Pioneer Group and seeks to update information regarding the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Area of Major Change.

Changes to the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Area of Major Change since previous Call for Sites

The Cambridge City Local Plan (adopted October 2018) makes reference to the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Area of Major Change in Policy 12 which states that:

This area is supported as a location for expansion and/or redevelopment for retail and leisure use (A1, A2, A3, A4 and D2), with residential and student accommodation on upper floors. The evidence base suggests that up to 12,000 sq m of new comparison retail floorspace could be provided in the area, although the precise quantum of net new retail floorspace and residential/student units will be subject to testing and demonstration through the development of a masterplan for the area.

The Area for Major Change is shown in Figure 1 below.

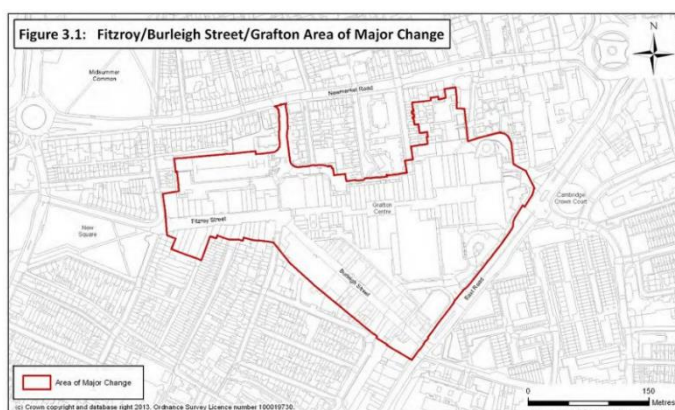


Figure 1 (Existing AoMC)



Bidwell House, Trumpington Road, Cambridge CB2 9LD
 T: 01223 841841 E: info@bidwells.co.uk W: bidwells.co.uk

The First Proposals document released for consultation in November 2021 sought to carry forward the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Centre Area for Major Change (AOMC) from the adopted Local Plan to the emerging GCLP.

The principle of retaining this policy context is supported. However, the AOMC requires an update following significant changes which are proposed for the area, and updates to the Use Classes Order which are designed to revitalise England's high streets/ town centres.

The Grafton Centre

On 7 February 2024, Cambridge City Council Planning Committee resolved to approve proposals for redevelopment of the Grafton Centre (ref: 23/02685/FUL) subject to a S106 agreement which is expected to be finalised imminently. The proposals are as follows:

- i) *Demolition of 11-12 Burleigh Street and Abbeygate House,*
- ii) *Part demolition and alterations to the Grafton Centre, removal of existing facades, erection of new floorspace for life science use, new and replacement façades and shopfronts, provision of terraces at fourth floor level, installation of plant and enclosures,*
- iii) *Redevelopment of existing bus turning head and redundant service area to provide new hotel and leisure quarter,*
- iv) *New pedestrian access route from Christchurch Street to Burleigh Street, provision of cycle parking spaces, public realm and landscape improvements,*
- v) *Highway works to East Road providing new bus stops, pedestrian and cycle routes and other associated works.*

These proposals represent a significant change and directly impact policy around this area in the Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Grafton Car Park West

Outside of the redline for the above development, our client maintains a freehold interest in the majority of the northern retail units to Fitzroy Street and the adjoining service/ Grafton Car Park West to the rear.

As a highly accessible city centre location, the remainder of the AOMC site has the potential to contribute to the city's needs, bridging the commercial and retail activity of the Grafton Centre and Fitzroy Street with adjacent residential uses.

We would encourage the City Council to maintain the allocation of the site as an AOMC, but note that there should be flexibility in respect of the appropriate uses in light of changes to national policy, and the pressing need for housing and economic development.

Conclusion

This representation seeks to update current information available in relation to the Fitzroy/Burleigh Street/Grafton Area of Major Change. Firstly, it is noted that development proposals under application reference 23/02685/FUL have led to significant changes in the area which will need to be acknowledged in policy. Secondly, it is considered that Grafton Car Park West represents a sustainable location for future development responding to the city's needs.

We look forward to engaging with the emerging Local Plan as it progresses further.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bainbridge MRTPI
Partner, Planning