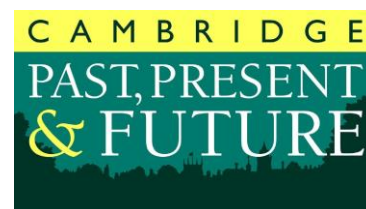


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20/10/2021

Dear Rapleys

### **Response to Three sites at Sidney St / Hobson St, Cambridge City Centre**

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxtton Watermill.

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Cambridge PPF welcomes your continued public engagement on this site.

In response to the questions raised in your survey the following comments are made.

**1. Whether you think the options we have chosen to appraise are a fair representation of the of the range of possibilities which exist.**

CPPF are disappointed that uses other than offices have not been considered. We value the opportunity that these buildings could provide for the public above the ground floor and views of the city that they could provide (such views not being readily available in the city). Opportunities to create a vibrant mixed-use development on the site incorporating residential at the upper levels, communal for town and gown, and clubs and restaurants at mid-level or in the basements, and quality retail addressing the Sidney Street frontage should be considered.

Have options involving some changes to 18/19 Sidney Street and a re-design of the former cinema to retain the façade and key internal features to incorporate features, such as bin storage, to improve Hobson's Passage been considered?

**2. Whether you think we have adopted the right criteria against which to assess the options.**

Cambridge PPF support the criteria you have adopted.

**3. Whether you think our assessment of the options against the adopted criteria is correct.**

It is considered that Option 2 has been scored harshly against the criteria of improving Hobsons's passage. Just because there are no changes to the Hobson's passage façade does not mean that there could be no improvements. These could be achieved through for example, lighting, treatment of the façade and passage way surface.

#### **4. Whether you think the conclusions of our options appraisal are correct.**

Option 1: it is agreed that doing nothing is not an option when development sites in the city are at such a premium and given the current under-use of the site.

Option 2: The size and scale of the re-development seems proportionate to the site - the development will not dominate that key intersection. Cambridge PPF would give greater weight to the social and environmental benefits of this option.

Option 3: This option results in a development which is bulkier. The retention of the cinema façade is supported. The new facade onto Hobson's Passage is not unattractive with rows of vertical rectangular windows subdivided by vertical spacers. It is considered that this probably represents the maximum scale of re-development that the site can realistically support. With its protruding mezzanine floor, the building is emergent against its surrounds and we have concerns about this.

Option 4: The loss of the existing Hobson Street façade is objected to in this option.

Option 5: This is the most massive of the proposed options. Because of the height, the block emerges above the height of the retained Sidney Street facade which looks incongruous. The height and mass are probably too great for the site and too conspicuous in such an important location. The loss of the Hobson Street façade is objected to. CambridgePPF would not support this option.

#### **5. Whether you think the options appraisal is a sound basis for determining the main parameters for any future proposals for the sites.**

The problem with scoring options is that it becomes a mathematical exercise when in reality some objectives and criteria will be given more weight over others.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Nicholas*

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer