

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Planning Register

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future  
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**Response to 25/04493/FUL: A new Cambridge Airbase for East Anglian Air Ambulance at New Shardelowes Farm Balsham Road Fulbourn**

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 Hinxton Watermill.

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future (CPPF) does not object to the proposed air ambulance base in principle, though we wish to formally raise concerns regarding its visual impact on the Green Belt and the surrounding open countryside. While we recognise the vital nature of the service provided, we request that the following issues are addressed and mitigated to ensure the development is compatible with its sensitive location.

CPPF concurs with the applicant's assessment that the site contributes to Green Belt purposes in only a partial or limited capacity. We accept that there are very special circumstances justifying an air ambulance facility in this location, particularly as part of the site can be classified as previously developed land. However, a clear tension remains between the requirement to maintain the openness of the Green Belt and the specific design choices currently proposed for the building complex.

The visual prominence of the site is a primary concern, especially as the proposed removal of the majority of existing trees will expose the development to both short and long-distance views. The inclusion of red cladding on the upper floors of the south-eastern elevation, coupled with red signage throughout the site, creates a visually jarring effect that is inconsistent with a rural landscape. We consider that these high-contrast colours unnecessarily increase the "perceived mass" of the building. While we acknowledge that this palette may reflect corporate branding, such considerations should not take precedence over the statutory duty to protect the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

In light of these concerns, we echo the query raised by the Urban Design Officer regarding why more natural, recessive materials were not prioritised. We ask that the Council either requests an amendment to the plans or imposes a pre-commencement condition requiring the approval of all external materials. We would strongly favour a revised colour palette consisting of muted tones that allow the structure to blend more effectively into the rural backdrop, thereby minimising its impact on the openness and character of the area.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Nicholas*

Principal Planning Officer