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Cambridge Past, Present & Future  
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**Response to 25/04555/FU: Change of use and demolition of existing commercial unit, ancillary stores/ workshops and erection of 8 no dwellinghouses including new access and associated works at 20-24 Pierce Lane 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 objects to this application as it fails to conserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area due to its density, massing and inappropriate design and is therefore contrary to Policy NH/14.

The site lies within Fulbourn Conservation Area. This section of the Conservation Area is characterised by more modern development of two and single storey dwellings, set behind hedgerows. There is no obvious backland development in this area.

Policy NH/14 requires development to sustain and enhance the special characteristics of the historic environment, in this instance, the Conservation Area.

We raise the following objections to the application.

**1. Failure to Address Previous Refusals** Although the four dwellings proposed for the Pierce Lane frontage are largely consistent with previous approvals, the "back-land" element of the site remains highly problematic. The previous application (24/02783/FUL) for five rear dwellings was refused due to overdevelopment and inappropriate density. While this new application reduces the number of rear units to four, the physical footprint and massing remain almost identical. Consequently, the reduction in unit numbers has failed to resolve the fundamental issue of a cramped and overdeveloped layout.

**2. Overdevelopment and Site Congestion** The density of this proposal remains high, resulting in a site dominated by hardstanding and vehicles. The visual prominence of parking—particularly for Plot 6—will be immediately apparent from Pierce Lane, undermining the street scene. Furthermore, the bin and cycle storage for the frontage units appear forced into a restricted space to accommodate parking, highlighting that the site is being asked to do too much.

**3. Inappropriate Architectural Design.** The architecture of the proposed dwellings to the rear of the site is out of context with other dwellings on Pierce Lane and the wider Conservation Area, making the design feel contrived. Rather than appearing as a subservient "mews-style" development appropriate for a rear site, these semi-detached units read as two bulky, detached masses. Effective back-land development should be simple and secondary to the frontage; these designs are overly complex and fail to reflect local characteristics.

**4. Heritage Impact and the NPPF** The Council's Conservation Officer finds that this proposal results in a low-moderate level of "less than substantial harm" to the Fulbourn Conservation Area. We do not consider that the minor benefits of redeveloping the site's frontage justify or "outweigh" the harm caused by the density and design of the rear dwellings. We agree with the Conservation Area that those benefits could be achieved through a frontage-only scheme without compromising the integrity of the Conservation Area.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Nicholas*

Principal Planning Officer