

Hughes Hall

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future

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### **Response to Hughes Hall Regeneration Project**

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 acknowledge the college's intention to improve its facilities and enhance the campus environment. However, we raise some concerns regarding the impact on the Open Space as protected in the City Local Plan.

Our primary concerns relate to sites 3 and 4 and the incremental erosion of land designated as Protected Open Space.

While site 4 lies within the protected open space, we appreciate that the extension will largely replace current extensions and the maintenance store. We will be interested to see the final plans for this extension and how it dovetails with Covent Garden Hall

Site 3 may technically sit outside the active cricket pitch, but it represents a direct encroachment onto the "greensward" and public open space that defines the area's character. We are concerned that the development will negatively affect the unique "ambience" and heritage character of Fenner's.

To overcome these concerns, the final plans must demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the physical and visual integrity of the POS. This could be achieved by retracting the proposed building footprints. If any encroachment remains, the college must provide a comprehensive mitigation strategy that proves the local community will receive a compensatory "net gain" in high-quality, accessible green space that outweighs the loss of the greensward.

The proposed works at Sites 1 and 2 offer a genuine opportunity to improve the college's entrance. Currently, the approach is dominated by the aesthetically unappealing rear elevations of the Kelsey Kerridge Sports Hall and the Queen Anne Terrace car park. Development in these specific locations is viewed as a positive step toward masking these "under-active" frontages and creating a more inviting, high-quality gateway.

In summary, while the improvements to the entrance areas are supported, the college must address the significant disquiet regarding the encroachment onto protected land. We look forward to seeing revised plans that reflect a sensitive integration with the Fenner's greensward and the Covent Garden Hall context.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Nicholas*

Principal Planning Officer