

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Planning Register

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future
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Response to 26/01037/FUL: Part demolition of the existing Romsey Labour Club with retention of the BLI historic frontage and erection of 60no. student studio units at Romsey Labour Club Mill Road Cambridge

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.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future (CPPF) have objected to previous applications on this site, but we are aware of the planning history and the decision of the Inspector in relation to the application for the services apartments. Therefore, our primary concern regarding the current application focuses on the alarming physical deterioration of the Building of Local Interest (BLI) and the risk this poses to the promised conservation of its historic frontage.

1. Intentional Neglect and Risk to Heritage

We are deeply concerned by the current state of the building, which has been allowed to fall into a state of very poor repair. Since the previous planning permission (22/01432/FUL) was granted, there has been no evidence of efforts to protect the site from excessive graffiti or environmental deterioration.

Our specific fear is that the developer may be allowing the building to reach such a level of disrepair that they will eventually argue the frontage is structurally unsalvageable, leading to a request for total demolition. This would be an unacceptable loss to the Romsey area, especially given the building's significant social history—having been designed by local architect E.W. Bond, built by voluntary labour, and opened by Ramsay MacDonald.

2. Protection of the BLI Frontage

This frontage is a vital component of the Mill Road conservation area.

- **Urgent Intervention:** We request that the Council scrutinise the applicant's commitment to the retention of the BLI historic frontage as stated in the current proposal.

- **Enforcement of Conditions:** If the Council is minded to approve this application, we strongly urge the inclusion of a robust **Condition** requiring the developer to act within a very short, specified timeframe to stabilise and protect the facades from further decay.

3. Concerns Regarding Overdevelopment

Whilst appreciating the planning history of the site, we note with concern the increase from 43 serviced apartments to 60 student studio units. This significant increase in density reinforces our long-standing concerns regarding the overdevelopment of this specific site and its impact on the surrounding environment.

Conclusion

The Romsey Labour Club is a landmark of local social history. We urge the Planning Committee to ensure that retention is not merely a placeholder in an application, but a mandatory requirement backed by immediate protective action. I have emailed in separately photographic evidence of the current state of the facades to assist in your assessment.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer

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Photographs accompanying online response to 26/01037/FUL: Part demolition of the existing Romsey Labour Club with retention of the BLI historic frontage and erection of 60no. student studio units at Romsey Labour Club Mill Road Cambridge



Photographs dated 10 April 2026