



By Online Planning Register

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**Response to 26/01664/FUL: Demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of 1 No. self/custom build dwellinghouse at 17 Adams 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.

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## Introduction

Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF) appreciate the applicant's desire to establish a long-term family home and welcome the integration of modern sustainability features such as air source heat pumps and solar PV panels. However, we hold strong reservations regarding the principle of total demolition and the architectural approach of the proposed replacement.

### 1. Sustainability, Embodied Carbon, and the Circular Economy

The Design, Access and Heritage Statement notes that the existing Arts and Crafts-influenced building is in poor structural and fabric condition. However, total demolition represents a substantial waste of embodied carbon that conflicts with modern sustainable development objectives.

- Adopted Policy 28 (Carbon reduction, community energy, sustainable design and construction) emphasises the need to take a proactive approach to economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Retaining and retrofitting existing structures is inherently more carbon-efficient than a complete rebuild.
- The Council's Draft Local Plan for Greater Cambridge introduces Policy CC/CE (Circular Economy). This emerging policy establishes a clear hierarchy that prioritises repairing, refurbishing, and re-using existing buildings over their demolition to minimise waste and carbon expenditures.
- The applicant's structural report highlights major subsidence through a main spine wall. While we acknowledge structural challenges exist, modern engineering frequently remedies foundation failures and subsidence. We respectfully request that the Council looks for a rigorous, independent

assessment to verify whether comprehensive renovation, stabilising underpinning, and thermal retrofitting are truly economically disproportionate before permitting total demolition.

## **2. Heritage and Design**

The site occupies a sensitive position within the West Cambridge Conservation Area (Grange Road Character Area). The existing dwelling is described by the applicant as a "poor-quality Arts and Crafts influenced detached dwelling", yet it actively contributes to the eclectic, high-quality architectural variety that defines the conservation area.

- The proposed replacement shifts the architectural style to a Queen Anne Revival influence. Rather than offering an innovative or authentically contextual design, the extensive front elevation operates as an imitation of traditional forms.
- Policy 57 (Designing New Buildings) of the Cambridge Local Plan states that new buildings must deliver high-quality, innovative design that enhances the existing quality of the area. Furthermore, Policy 61 (Conservation and Enhancement of Cambridge's Historic Environment) demands that development preserves or enhances the significance of the conservation area.
- Replacing an authentic, albeit altered, domestic Arts and Crafts building with a modern facsimile of a Queen Anne style risks diluting the genuine historic character of Adams Road. High-quality contextual design should seek to harmonise with the area through sensitive scale and contemporary architecture.

## **Conclusion**

CPPF urges the Council to resist the demolition of 17 Adams Road until it can be robustly proven that refurbishment and carbon retention are entirely unfeasible. Should demolition be deemed unavoidable, we request that the architectural design be reconsidered, ensuring that any replacement truly upholds the high standards required by Policies 57 and 61 of the Local Plan.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Nicholas*

Principal Planning Officer