Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Planning Register

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Wandlebury Country Park
Cambridge CB22 3AE

Phone 01223 - 243830
www.cambridgeppf.org

Response to 26/03717/FUL: Installation of a rooftop telecommunications base station at Graduate By Hilton Granta Place Mill Lane 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 Hinxton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present and Future (CPPF) are concerned about the impact of the telecommunications equipment on the Conservation Area. The proposal in its current form will result in harm to the character of Coe Fen and Sheep's Green by introducing prominent additions into sensitive views from Sheep's Green and the River Cam. We therefore urge that the scheme be amended, supporting the Conservation Officer's request to re-site the most intrusive antenna.

The application site is located within the Central Conservation Area and near a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including Grade I, Grade II*, and Grade II listed buildings, as well as Buildings of Local Interest. Policy 55 requires development to respond to this context and Policy 61 requires development to preserve or enhance the significance of these heritage assets, their setting and the wider townscape, including views into, within and out of the conservation area.

Coe Fen and Sheep's Green bring the rural landscape close to the city centre, and the many listed buildings of Cambridge's historic core. The Central Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA), for Coe Fen and Sheep's Green identifies how important these areas are as thoroughfares for cyclists and pedestrians and for the numerous views to the city or other buildings in their settings. We therefore consider that the setting and views from and across Coe Fen and Sheep's Green are important aspects of the Conservation Area to be protected. Although the CAA identifies the hotel as having a less than positive impact on the Conservation Area, this is not a reason to allow development which would have a negative impact.

It is appreciated that the Design and Access Statement explains that the scale of the apparatus has been kept to a minimum and other than the antenna, all other equipment has been located centrally on the roof, and the shrouding has been designed to look like the building's stonework. However, the proposed shrouds are over 4m in height and the photomontages illustrate how prominent they will be from certain vantage points.

When looking northwards, the views of the shrouds are mitigated by trees and being viewed as part of other roof top installations. However, the north western shroud is particularly prominent when looking southwards from the River and Sheep's Green. We therefore consider that this development will result in some harm to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Because the proposal in its present form causes potentially avoidable harm on the significance and setting of the Conservation Area, CPPF strongly supports the Conservation Officer's request to re-site the north-western antenna to a less prominent position on the roof.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer