

Dear Patsy

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION STRATEGY

On behalf of Ridley Hall, Cambridge we are instructed to submit representations regarding the Council's Draft Open Space and Recreation Strategy.

The Draft Strategy suggests that the central lawn area within the grounds of Ridley Hall along with the Principal's Garden are designated as open space. Discussion has taken place regarding these spaces on previous occasions with the Council through the Development Control process. We acknowledge that the central lawn area performs an open space function. However, we disagree that the Principal's Garden meets the criteria for designation and therefore the request that this designation is removed from the Draft Strategy. We set out our consideration of the Strategy below.

The Principal's Garden and the central lawned area are distinctly different and separate. No explanation is given within the document as to how these spaces function as one. It is clear from the architects original intention, as set out in our Heritage Assessment submitted with the planning application, that it was always the intention to deliver a traditional quadrangular Cambridge college. The Principal's Garden has never been intended as open space, although has recently been used in association with the Lodge as a private garden. It is apparent from the information supplied that the Council has considered these areas as one. We consider that the Council needs to assess the value of these spaces separately.

The Council's assessment sheet under Environmental Importance identifies that the open space has significant historical, cultural or known archaeological interest. This is clearly not the case in relation to the Principal's Garden. This view that this Garden has no heritage value was supported by the Council's Conservation Team who responded as such during the recent consultation on planning applications at Ridley Hall. The assessment sheet needs to be amended to reflect this assessment.

In relation to question b(i) the assessment identifies that the area has positive features such as trees, streams, hedgerows or meadow lands sufficient to give it a major contribution to the character of the local area. Planning applications for Ridley Hall were accompanied by an Ecological Assessment and trees surveys. Neither of these identify that there are any areas of ecological or arboricultural value within the Principal's Garden. In relation to the Principal's Garden this assessment should be amended to "no". The Heritage Assessment submitted with the planning applications identify that the architect's original intention was to complete the development of a traditional quadrangular Cambridge college. In its response to those



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applications the Council's Conservation Team identified that the gap in the frontage to Newnham Walk occupied by the Principal's Garden was at odds with the heritage of the area. Given that assessment on townscape grounds we cannot see that the Open Space Assessment can identify the area adjacent the Principal's Lodge as being an important green break in the framework of the local area. Indeed, this gap in the built frontage is discordant with the townscape value of the area and is detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area and setting of the listed buildings. Accordingly b(ii) should be amended to read no.

For reasons already set out, the Principal's Garden does not form part of a network of open space in the area. The Principal's Garden is a private garden and provides no environmental function whatsoever and accordingly the response to question (iii) should be "no". In response to question (v) as already set out, the Heritage Assessment submitted and the Council's Conservation Team has already assessed that the Principal's Garden has no local historical or cultural value and accordingly this should be amended to no.

Question (e) relates to the recreational importance of the area. It asks does the site make a "major contribution" to the recreational resources of the area? The assessment identifies that owing to its size and accessibility the people who live, work or study in a local area could use it for recreational purposes. The Principal's Garden cannot be said to make a **major** contribution to the recreational resource of the local area. Accordingly, this should be amended to "no".

The scoring table attributes a 4 in terms of planted areas and 4 in terms of trees. The Tree Survey submitted with the planning application identified only one tree of value and worthy of retention in the Principal's Garden. That tree has subsequently been removed owing to disease. The scoring in relation to the planted areas and trees can not be substantiated by the evidence. These should be amended to 1.

In terms of grassed area, the Principal's Garden has poor coverage, is not flat, and has been disturbed following archaeological exploration. A more accurate reflection of the quality of the grassed area would be 1 (as opposed to 5).

In terms of hard landscaping, there is none in the Principal's Garden. That within the main quad is of poor quality. Accordingly, in relation to the Principal's Garden the assessment should be "n/a" and for the quad 1 (as opposed to 5).

The entrance to the Principal's Garden is neither obvious or attractive – score 1. In terms of "getting there", both spaces are within private grounds and the entrance block presents a major barrier. For both sites the assessment should read 1. Similarly, there is very poor access for disabled persons and those with pushchairs – score 1.

There is no external lighting in the Principal's Garden. Score 1.

The Principal's Garden is unused at present (criterion 17) - score 1, and there are no seats (criterion 21) – score 1.

It is unclear why the Council's strategy makes no assessment from criteria 22 onwards. It is apparent that the Principal's Garden would score "1" in relation to all the relevant criteria, for example, enticing for young people to play". The assessment should be completed. Our consideration suggests that the site would score 37 and of a total of 165, or 22%. Clearly the Principal's Garden does not meet the criteria for designation as open space.

Accordingly, based on an objective assessment of the value of the Principal's Garden, its designation as open space cannot be supported. We therefore suggest that the notation be amended to simply refer to the central area of the quad.

In terms of recreational value, there is no quantitative assessment of recreational needs. We cannot see how seeking to designate land for a recreational importance can be achieved without any assessment of recreational requirements.

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In addition to the above comments regarding the assessment of Ridley Hall, we also express considerable concern regarding the status of the document. PPS12 is clear that only a Development Plan Document can allocate sites for a particular use. Accordingly, whilst we recognise the strategy can form part of the evidence base to inform future planning policy making through the review of the Local Plan, this strategy in itself cannot designate land as open space particularly where representations regarding it cannot be thoroughly tested. Accordingly we consider that the Council cannot place any significant weight on this document until it has been subject to the due process and testing through the Development Plan.”

Yours sincerely