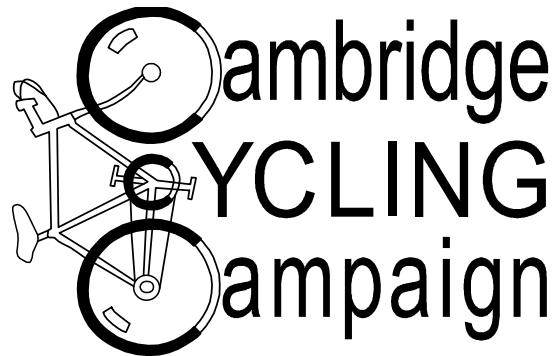


19th October 2006

Our ref: P06018

Toby Williams,
Planning Officer,
Cambridge City Council



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

P.O. Box 204, Cambridge CB4 3FN
01223 690718 (phone & fax)
contact@camcycle.org.uk
www.camcycle.org.uk

Dear Toby Williams,

PLANNING APPLICATION, REF 06/0795/OUT.

LAND OFF BABRAHAM ROAD

(BELL EDUCATIONAL TRUST DEVELOPMENT)

This letter is a formal objection to the above Planning Application. As a local voluntary organization concerned with provision for cycling, we restrict ourselves here to cycling issues. We first raise matters relating to cycling provision on site, then turn to the question of access to the site (including the junction with Babraham Road) which is to be considered as part of the present application. Finally we raise issues relevant for Section 106 funding arising from this development - that is funding of cycle routes linking this development to such destinations as Cambridge City Centre, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Babraham Road Park and Ride site.

On-Site Cycling Issues.

We are very concerned at the lack of information provided about on-site provision for cycling. It is entirely unacceptable, even in an outline application, to enter TBA in the application form's column asking applicants to specify the number of cycle parking stands to be provided. The rules of the Cycle Parking Standards set out in the Local Plan mean that several hundred cycle parking spaces, each needing an area of

approximately 1.5sqm, will be required for the 347 planned dwellings plus the substantial amount of student accommodation planned for the site. In a city in which more than 25% of people cycle to work, cycle parking provision is not a minor matter to be slotted in at a later stage in the planning process. Significantly large areas of land are needed and they all have to be in the right locations if the requirements of the City's Cycle Parking Standards are to be met. On-site road layout is determined at this stage of the planning process and the adequacy of this road layout for cycle access cannot be established unless the quantity and location of both visitor and resident cycle parking areas are fully and clearly specified now.

For the reason set out above we cannot judge whether the on-site cycle route provision does or does not comply with both government guidance and what we regard as good practice. We consider it essential that all such provision should as a starting point comply with the standards set out in the latest edition of the Department for Transport's *"Cycle-Friendly Infrastructure: Guidelines for Planning and Design"* together with the more recent draft guidance in the DfT's *Local Transport Notes* and their *Manual for Streets*. We would mention here our particular concern over compliance in relation to widths, gradients, radii and visibility splays together with absence of obstructions along on-site cycle routes. For a city with as high rates of cycling as Cambridge these are not minor matters and in our considered opinion the application should be withdrawn until these issues have been clarified sufficiently to allow this application to be properly evaluated.

Speed within such a high-density development will need to be rigorously controlled. A limit of 20mph or less is a necessity.

Access to the Development

Access to the site (including the junction with Babraham Road) is to be considered as part of the present application.

There are five practicable routes for cyclists into the site. In a planning application intended to define the layout of the site it is unacceptable that these are listed as potential. Are they, or are they not, agreed routes, confirmed as practicable? If not, how can the application be judged? We suggest that a planning condition should specify that all five of these routes must be provided, that they must all be hard-surfaced and designed for cycling (and in accordance with the standards set out above) as well as for other users. The routes are as follows:

1. A route linking the student accommodation to be provided on this development with the Bell School itself. Students need to be able to store their bicycles securely

where they live and they need to be able to cycle through the Bell School campus to be able to do so.

2. The route through Greenlands. This would be the main route for pedestrians and cyclists to travel to the East side of the Addenbrooke's Hospital complex.

3. The route in the North-West corner of the development listed on the indicative masterplan as "Potential footpath/cycleway link to national cycle network route 11". This would be the main route for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to the West section of the Addenbrooke's Hospital complex and to the planned new Addenbrooke's Access Road when it has been constructed.

4. The route in the South-West corner of the site listed on the indicative masterplan as "Potential footpath link to permissive footpath/bridleway". This route should become not just a pedestrian link, but also a cycle link to the national cycle network route for cyclists wishing to travel South-West to Shelford along the national cycle route.

5. The main proposed access linking the development to Babraham Road. We object strongly and fundamentally to this access route which if constructed would cause serious difficulties and dangers for cyclists travelling along Babraham Road. We set out these difficulties and dangers below. A very much better potential alternative access route could, and in our view should, be built. This would run directly from the existing traffic-signalled junction of Babraham Road with Wort's Causeway. It would go though the land belonging to the Bell School alongside the boundary of the garden of No 2 Babraham Road.

The developers set out two options, Options A and B, for the junction they propose with Babraham Road.

Option A is so inconsistent with the City and County Councils' aims and aspirations for cycling in Cambridge that we consider it extraordinary that it should be put forward in this planning application. It would convert a section of the heavily-used shared-use cycle path linking the Park and Ride site with Addenbrooke's Hospital and with Cambridge city centre into a narrow footpath usable only by pedestrians. Law-abiding cyclists would have to leave the path on the East side of Babraham Road at the new junction, to cross the road via a two-stage pedestrian/cycle crossing and then to cross the access road to the new development via yet another pedestrian/cycle crossing. They would have to push a button and to wait three times in succession. This is unacceptable and impracticable. The consequence is obvious: inexperienced cyclists, including school-age children, who at present use the shared-use path would be encouraged either to use the proposed narrow footpath illegally or instead to use a road with a 40mph speed limit which passes a junction (Babraham Road/Granham's Road) with a high accident record. Option A should not have been put forward and should be immediately rejected. (There are additional reasons for rejecting Option A but it should not be necessary to list them here.)

Option B is also unacceptable for cyclists but for different reasons:

- (a) The proposed staggered Toucan crossing across Babraham Road is unsatisfactory. In the layout for Option B, the road at this point would be 12.5m wide. Current Department for Transport advice cites the following: "LTN2/95 states that when a road is more than 15 metres wide a staggered layout should be provided but if the road width is between 11 and 15 metres a staggered layout should be considered." (*Puffin Good Practice Guide*, Department of Transport, 2006, page 17.) So there is no requirement or recommendation for a staggered crossing (or indeed for any mid-road island) for a road of this width. The proposed staggered island is 4.25m wide. We consider that any crossing with a substantial mid-road island here would cause difficulties for cyclists because, firstly, intimidating and potentially dangerous pinch points, with similarities to those which are currently producing such problems in King's Hedges Road¹, would be created. Secondly, such an island would add to the tailbacks at peak hours along Hill's Road and Babraham Road. Thirdly such an island would tend to block ambulances and other emergency vehicles travelling along the A1307, a road with high accident figures. Fourthly, the proposed 1.25m-wide on-road cycle lane is below the nationally recommended minimum of 1.5m. Fifthly, two-stage crossings encourage an unsatisfactorily high rate of non-compliance by pedestrians and cyclists with the signal for the second stage of the crossing. For all these reasons we consider that any Toucan crossing to be built at this point should be direct and uninterrupted by any kind of mid-road island.
- (b) The right-turn lane to enable southbound traffic to turn into the proposed access road would create even more worrying pinch points. The roadway here would be 11.7m wide. The cycle lane would be reduced to an absurdly narrow 0.5m wide, and two of the traffic lanes would be much too narrow (3m and 3.2m) to accommodate a motor vehicle with a cycle alongside. The Department of Transport's "*Cyclists at Road Narrowings*" (TAL1/97) states that LTN 2/95 "recommends that where a pedestrian refuge island is introduced, a vehicle lane width of 4.5m should be maintained". It goes on to say that "It should normally be anticipated that at least 70% of drivers will attempt to overtake a cyclist within or close to a 3.5m narrowing." Clearly lanes of 3m and 3.2 m should be treated as unacceptably dangerous on a main road with heavy traffic and many on-road cyclists. Could this problem be resolved by modifying Option B? We believe that purchase (if necessary compulsory purchase) of a narrow strip of land along the frontage of the Strangeways Research Laboratory could give the width to reduce the impact of the pinch points. However we anticipate that this would probably be unacceptable because of the effect on a number of high quality trees along this frontage.

¹ "The video clips viewable at the following website show the shockingly dangerous results of this:
www.camcycle.org.uk/jumpto/khrvideos

- (c) The access road into the development would have no footway along its South side. Inevitably a proportion of pedestrians would walk in the roadway causing difficulties for cyclists and motorists. A development planned for such a high density of inhabitants should be properly equipped with access footways.

Our clear conclusion is that neither Option A nor Option B could be made acceptable in Cambridge where, of course, there are both an exceptionally high level of cycling and a commitment by the City and County Councils to give priority to the needs of cyclists. We have already outlined an alternative and we return to this now. A very much better potential access route could, and in our view should, be constructed running into the development directly from the existing traffic-signalled junction of Babraham Road with Wort's Causeway. It would go though the land belonging to the Bell School alongside the boundary of the garden of No 2 Babraham Road. At this junction there is plenty of available space to provide a high-quality junction which would be much better not just for cyclists but for all road users.

Issues relevant for Section 106 Funding arising from this Development.

We consider that Section 106 funding arising from this development should be partly used to finance the following cycling provision:

- (1) The construction of the very short machine-laid tarmac-surfaced pedestrian/cycle path required from the site boundary to the roadway at Greenlands.
- (2) The construction of the short tarmac-surfaced pedestrian/cycle path required from the North-West corner site boundary up to the newly constructed national cycle route. This link should be constructed to the same specification as the national cycle route. It is important that it should be machine laid.
- (3) The construction of the tarmac-surfaced pedestrian/cycle path required from the South -West corner site boundary along the bridleway as far as the connection with the newly-constructed national cycle route. This link should be constructed to the same specification as the national cycle route. It is important that it should be machine laid.
- (4) The construction of the new junction that should be built where Wort's Causeway joins Babraham Road and where a new link road should be built to provide access to the development in place of the junction proposed in the planning application.
- (5) The construction of a red-ramped direct pedestrian/cycle crossing to carry the existing shared-use cycleway from the front of the bus station to join the existing shared-use cycleway along Hill's Road towards the city centre.

- (6) The construction of adequate cycle access from the West end of Red Cross Lane via a new short link and a well-designed cycle junction with the Addenbrooke's Hospital roadway.
- (7) The widening, resurfacing and conversion to shared-use of the length of direct footway between the end of Red Cross Lane and the new national cycle route.
- (8) Contribution to the cost of redesigning Hill's Road railway bridge to provide high-quality on-road cycle lanes over the bridge in both directions.
- (9) Upgrading of the shared-use pedestrian/cycle path linking the development to the Park and Ride site.

Yours sincerely

James Woodburn

on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign