

**1st June 2016**

Dear Rob Brereton,

Planning application: 16/0821/FUL Romsey Labour Club, Mill Road
Mixed used development comprising a Day Nursery at ground floor and 40 self-contained 1xbed student rooms at the rear and on the upper floors along with a vehicle drop-off zone, cycle parking and associated landscaping.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign works for better, safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge and has over 1,200 members. We scrutinise planning applications to ascertain whether new developments include facilities that will encourage more cycling.

While Cambridge Cycling Campaign is in favour of car-free developments we **OBJECT** to the proposed development because the cycle parking is inadequate. We are also concerned that the transport assessment prepared by Transport Planning Associates, Cambridge, contains serious inaccuracies regarding the streets and facilities for pedestrians and cycling in the neighbourhood.

Inadequate cycle parking for residents

As a point of principle, residential cycle parking must be convenient and comply with the Local Plan standards. There must be good access, and doors and stairs will discourage residents from using the cycle parking area. Instead they will use the public cycle parking outside and any nearby lamp posts, fences etc. in the vicinity.

The plans show that cycle parking for residents is provided in the basement and is accessed by stairs and a wheel ramp. The steepness of the ramp is not stated but if it is too steep it will be unsafe to use with a heavily loaded bike. The ramp is on one side and may be too close to the wall to enable easy use. If it is too steep or too close to the wall it will not be easy to use with a bicycle with wide handlebars, a large basket and/or panniers. The basement parking area will be inaccessible to non standard cycles such as tricycles, and there is no provision for such cycles on the ground floor. Disability access standards require a ramp no steeper than 5% or 1 in 20.

The plans show double doors at the entrance to the stairs to the cycle parking. These will be difficult to open while holding a bike unless the doors are automated. Nor is it clear whether there are measures to stop access to the doors being blocked by a vehicle in the drop off space.

The 40 cycle parking spaces in the main block are well spaced (slightly more than 1000mm between centres, at least 500mm from the wall) with 2200mm per bike. However, the "corridors" between and around the racks are a little tight. The one between racks and the wall is 1300mm. The one between racks is 1200mm. This does not provide much space for manoeuvring, or for bikes with large baskets or panniers or wide handlebars.

continued

The angle of the diagonal racks means that the sides nearer the wall are not very accessible - bikes would have to be inserted rear wheel first with normal width handlebars. This means that the number of spaces

provided is, in effect, reduced.

Provision for cyclists with disabilities

We note that the plans show that some of the bedsit units are to be designed to be fully accessible for disabled use. As some people with disabilities use cycles this must be considered when planning cycle parking. Cycle parking provision for people with disabilities needs to be at street level, not in a basement, and near the entrance doors.

Lack of staff cycle parking

Point 4.9 of the Transport Statement says “Staff working at the nursery are likely to reside locally and will be encouraged to walk or cycle to work” however there is no indication of where parking for staff cycles will be provided. Neither sharing with the residential parking, nor shared with the on-street visitor parking is adequate. If staff are to be encouraged to cycle they need to be provided with convenient, secure and preferably covered cycle parking. Space should also be provided for drying and storing wet coats and boots.

Facilities for dropping off at the nursery

The plan in Appendix A shows space for two parked vehicles but there is no indication of where people arriving by bicycle with children are meant to park. Many parents in Cambridge travel, with their children, by bicycle, using a variety of specialist cycles including Bakfiets, cargo bikes, trailers, tag-alongs and tandems. Space must be provided to enable people to ride their bikes onto the site and to park them while they deliver or collect children from the nursery.

Inaccuracies in the Transport Assessment by TPA Cambridge

The Transport Assessment contains numerous errors and inaccuracies. We think this reflects extremely badly on the company that produced it, TPA Cambridge, and we ask the Planning Department to be vigilant in scrutinising further reports from this company. TPA Cambridge state that the footways on Mill Road are approximately 1.5 metres in width. However, the *Manual for Streets* gives a minimum of 2.0m for the width of the footway for a lightly trafficked street. The footways here are substandard, particularly given that the Mill Road is a busy area, much frequented by pedestrians and cyclists. While there are both traffic signal controlled and uncontrolled crossings, the dropped kerbs are not flush.

We would challenge the statement in 3.11: “A number of dedicated cycle facilities are provided in the vicinity”, and would like the developers to produce a map or list of the facilities they believe are provided for cycling. Figure 3.2 in the Appendix to the Transport Assessment shows, in blue, cycle routes, but very few of these are 'dedicated cycle facilities'. Most are not even cycle lanes.

While many cyclists do use Mill Road, it is not wide and the Transport Statement is wrong in saying the speed restriction is 30mph. It is actually 20mph, like most of the streets in the area, but nevertheless Mill Road is considered hostile to cycling. The same is true of Coleridge Road, even though it is wider.

Because of the poor access to the residents' cycle parking, lack of staff cycle parking, lack of space for dropping off children by cycle and the inaccuracies in the Transport Assessment, we object to this planning application.

Your sincerely,
On behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Al Storer
Trustee