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Our ref: M13002

Planning Department
Cambridge City Council
The Guildhall
Cambridge
CB2 0AP



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Dear Cambridge City Council Planning Committee,

12/1622/FUL: Cycle park

Cambridge Cycling Campaign is writing to enthusiastically support planning application 12/1622/FUL for a cycle park at Cambridge Railway Station. We do hope councillors will approve the application, which will go a long way to resolving the desperate and long-standing shortage of cycle parking at the station. We already know that there can be twice as many bikes parked in every conceivable location than there are spaces currently.

While it would always be preferable not to have to use two-tier racks, we understand the economics of the cycle park, and the trial installation has allayed many of the concerns and shown which are the most suitable racks.

We note the Highway Authority's comments about the use of stepped ramps. This has been a concern of ours as well, and we would dearly like to have a cycle park where one could cycle to every space. However, we have been persuaded that the proposed ramps will cope well with the high volume of movements and be economical in use of space, based on proven examples from the Netherlands, unlike the abysmal example on the bridge at the station. What is particularly persuasive to us is that a cycleable ramp would have to be at least three times as long, and this would mean users approaching from directions other than the ramp would have to cycle up to 200m further to reach the first floor than they would do with the proposed design, therefore negating any time saving during a walk to the station entrance (or vice-versa).

We note the developer's specific design feature that the edge of the cycle park nearest the cycle bridge is such that this wall could be removed and the cycle park then extended across the current park. This provides for future extension of the facility as well as fulfilling our desire for a cycleable ramp in the facility in addition to the proposed stepped ramp.

Highways comments also refer to the need for a lift. We understand that spaces are available at ground level for cyclists with disabilities and for untypical bikes (trikes, trailers etc). We think a planning condition is needed to require a management regime which ensures those spaces are, in fact, only by those intended. (We understand the developer is

also aware of this requirement.) Otherwise there is a risk that these places could be taken up by bicycles whose users could easily use racks on the upper floors.

However, we share Highways' view that a lift would be helpful. We also note the proximity of the bridge over to platforms 7 and 8, which already includes a lift. We know that the proposed structure has been designed to accommodate a link to the bridge - a short extension to the existing bridge. We think this would have huge advantages, not just for cyclists, in providing lift access and direct access to the platforms (with suitable barrier and ticket machine), reducing the two-minute walk to the entrance, only to half to walk back again along the platforms in many cases, to a much more convenient direct access to all platforms. We think a planning condition should be imposed which ensures the design would accommodate this link. This would not be an onerous requirement as it is our understanding the design does already do this.

Secondly, we think the cycle park would be a complete failure if ordinary cycling parking is not free. We are also mindful of the disaster at the Grand Arcade, where only about half the number of spaces expected were provided free and as a result there is enormous pressure on city centre cycle parking once again. We recognise that there could be a demand for a premium service which could be paid for but unless the vast majority of spaces are free, the cycle park will not be used. In a meeting involving the developer and the City Council planner that we attended, a figure of 5% maximum paid spaces was agreed, and we have not heard any suggestions of a higher figure. Therefore, we feel strongly that a planning condition must be imposed that limits the number of paid-for spaces to a maximum of 5%.

Thirdly, we are assured by the current operator that though there would be a brief closure overnight, parking will be available during train operating hours. We think it is very important that a future operator does not take a different view, and to this end we think a planning condition should be imposed which requires that people catching the first train can park their bikes and those arriving on the last train do not find themselves locked out, and that this applies even if the last train is running late.

We are disappointed that the 200 cycle parking spaces we understood were to be included in the station square are not being included. We see no reason why these should not be added, as space appears to be available.

We are concerned that the route through the station square is not clear, and may create conflict with vehicles, particular for users coming from the southern side of the Guided Busway rather than using the new road through the Skanska development. We ask that this be dealt with by condition.

Notwithstanding these minor issues, we wholeheartedly support the application and commend it to the committee.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,



David Earl

Summary of planning conditions requested

1. Management regime to be agreed which controls access to disabled and non-conventional bike spaces

2. Require design to accommodate potential future link to bridge to platforms 7/8
3. Limit paid spaces to a maximum of 5%
4. Require opening hours to accommodate use of all trains, including late running trains
5. Require agreement with the Highway Authority regarding route through station square