

CAMCYCLE



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Subject: Application S/3440/18/OL

Case Officer Mike Huntington
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne CB23 6EA

October 7, 2018

Dear Mr Huntington,

Camcycle is a volunteer-led charity with over 1,250 members that works for more, better and safer cycling and walking for all ages and abilities in the Cambridge region. We are objecting to application S/3440/18/OL under policies HQ/1 and TI/2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan because the development appears to prioritise motor traffic above walking and cycling, despite claims to the contrary. The walking and cycling routes appear to be frequently interrupted, peripheral to the site, and of poor quality.

Before elaborating our objections, we will list a few things that we believe are positive about the application: (a) there are numerous walking/cycling-only access points shown on the parameter plan (although crucial details remain unknown); (b) there is a semblance of a walking/cycling 'grid' (although it is missing some links, crossings appear to be poor-quality, and other crucial details remain unknown); (c) the western access across Broadway to Cambourne appears to be sound in concept (although there are unresolved difficulties with safe sight-lines at the crossing); (d) there is a more sensible dedicated bus route through the development compared to Cambourne (although it could stand to be more central and direct) and (e) there is a commitment to including readily available cycle parking (although the details remain vague).

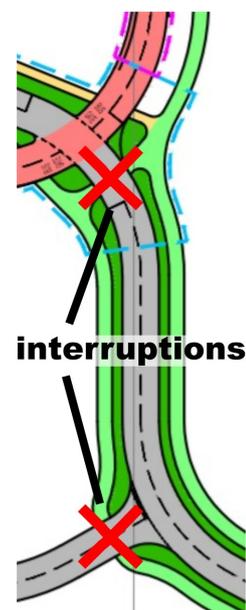
Regarding our objections: according to policy TI/2, planning permission for these types of developments will be granted only *'where the site has (or will attain) sufficient integration and accessibility by walking, cycling, or public and community transport'*. In Local Plan paragraph 10.16 it says that *'All development should strive to offer real travel choice for all people by non-car modes appropriate in scale and kind to the development. Development must be designed to promote road safety, and to create places where walking and cycling have priority over motorised traffic, so that people feel safe'*. National Planning Policy Framework Section 9 paragraph 110 states: *'Within this context, applications for development should: a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements'*.

Yet, when we examine the documents for this application, we find many cases where walkways and cycleways are interrupted and give way to motor traffic carriageways. For example, in drawing 'CP-BOURNACCESS(WESTERN).1' we see that cycleways are interrupted in one case by the primary road and in another case by a minor side road.

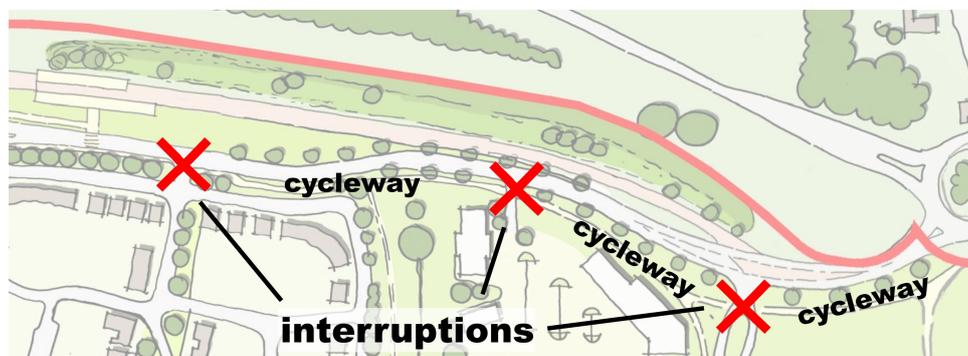
In the Illustrative Master Plan there are numerous cases of minor side roads interrupting footways and cycleways, giving priority to motor traffic over people walking and cycling. It also appears to be the case that all of the off-road walking and cycling routes are interrupted every time they encounter roads. Further confusion is caused because some documents refer to these off-road pathways as cycle routes, while some others refer to them simply as footpaths (e.g. on page 114 of the Design and Access Statement the diagram refers to a 'Footpath connecting the outdoor sports' while indicating one of the walking and cycling links from the parameter plan).

Even the 'strategic cycleway' is broken: from the eastern edge of the site the strategic cycleway is interrupted twice by minor roads before it disappears entirely at a third minor road; all of this happens before it even reaches the eastern bus halt.

West of the eastern bus halt the strategic cycleway does continue for a long, uninterrupted stretch. That portion may be useful for some people who are transiting the site. However it avoids nearly all of the destinations within the site, and it is a socially isolated route that will feel dangerous at night. Therefore it is much less useful than it could have been. People who need to access places within the site will find themselves on either the local cycle network or the shared-use pathways alongside the primary road. However, both of these types of paths are interrupted numerous times and forced to give way to minor side roads. Therefore many people will not want to use such pathways because of the constant stopping and starting, danger from turning vehicles, and conflicts with pedestrians. However that effectively means there is no cycle infrastructure in the site that is suitable for transport use at all times of day by people who are just trying to get from point A to point B, possibly with children along.



Cycleways in green are interrupted by roads at the red Xs.



The strategic cycleway is interrupted three times in this section alone.

The primary school has been placed along the primary road, which ensures that children will be exposed to road danger and air pollution, and that the school run will take place by car instead of walking and cycling, leading to congested roads and anti-social parking.

The Travel Plan appears to consist entirely of 'soft' measures such as cycle training and vouchers to encourage people to cycle. Those types of measures can have only minor effect when the 'hard' infrastructure does not support cycling for people of all ages and abilities. No amount of encouragement is going to help a person who is new to cycling when the roads are hostile and the environment scary. The experience in places where cycling is a common means of transport, like the Netherlands, shows that people who are concerned but interested in cycling will be most encouraged by having safe and accessible cycle infrastructure that enables everyone who wants to cycle to be able to do so in a safe,

convenient and dignified way. That infrastructure must be in place before people move into dwellings because travel habits are often hardened after first forming in a new neighbourhood; in order to ensure that sustainable travel habits have the best chance of forming the enabling infrastructure must be ready from day 1.

Overall, it is quite clear from examining this plan that walking and cycling are held in very little regard, and have been included only as an afterthought in order to tick a box. We are disappointed that the opportunity was not taken to create a fresh design of the local transport network in a way that prioritises walking and cycling, puts walking and cycling routes front and centre, protects children from motor vehicle traffic and pollution, and integrates well with efficient public transport.

Our recommendation for this (and other developments) is to adopt the lessons of Houten in the Netherlands by designing a perimeter roadway that keeps most motor traffic to the exterior of the site. Within the perimeter, walking and cycling routes should be protected from and have priority over motor traffic. The interior should be divided into sections with boundaries that prevent private motor traffic from rat-running, while remaining fully permeable to walking, cycling, emergency vehicles and where applicable, public transport. Private motor traffic should be directed outwards to the perimeter roadway, and around the outside of the built-up area. This ensures that walking, cycling and public transport enjoy a grid of simple and direct routes and become the preferable option for local transport, while internal motor traffic congestion is minimised. Bourn Airfield does not have a railway like Houten, but the dedicated strategic bus route can serve a similar purpose. Please see the ITDP study¹ of Houten for more information.

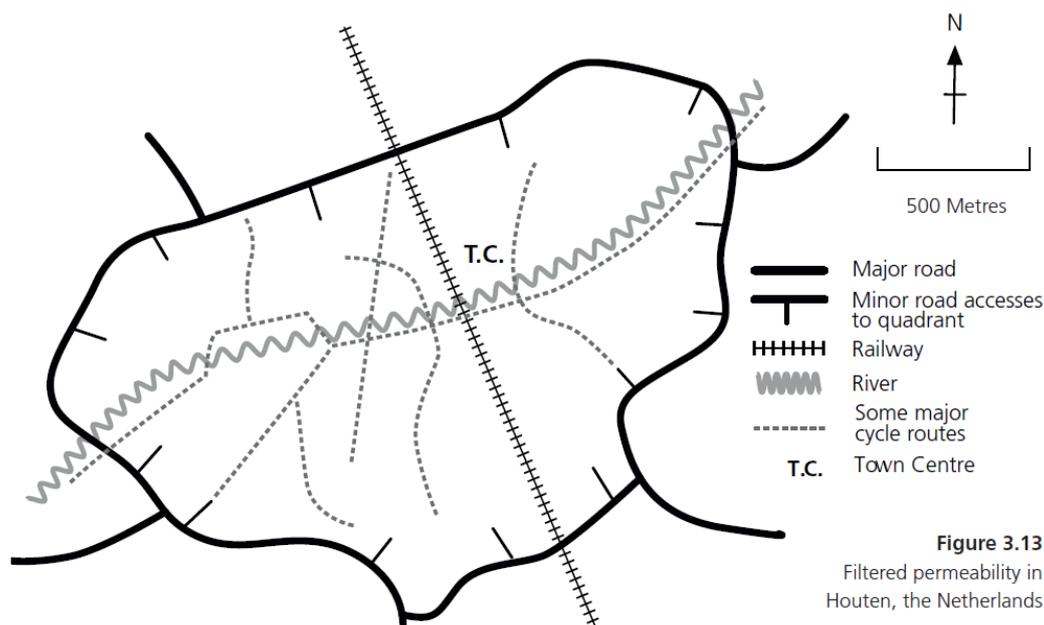


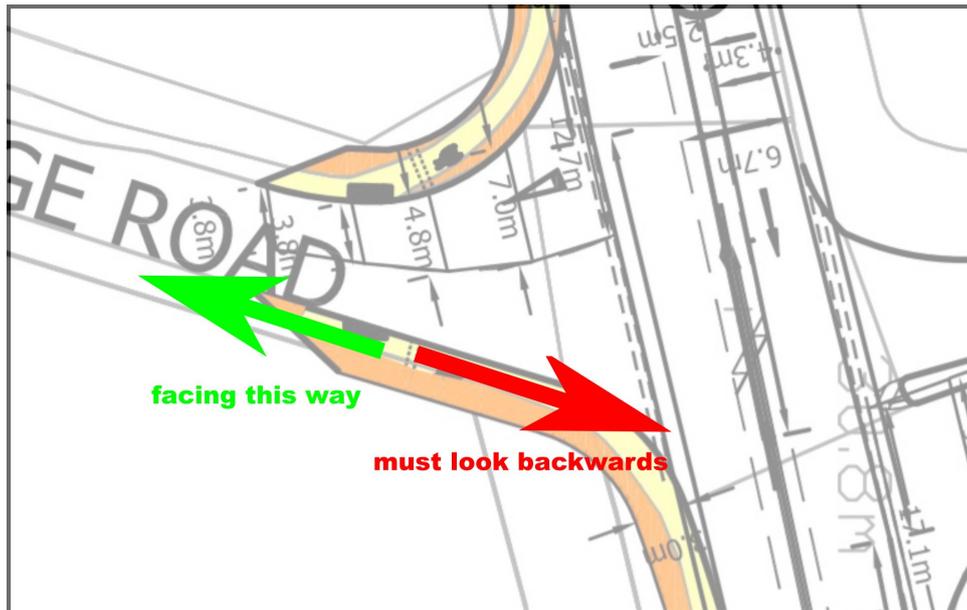
Figure 3.13
Filtered permeability in Houten, the Netherlands

Indicative plan of Houten showing perimeter roadway and internal walking/cycling network. Car access is divided into quadrants, and driving between quadrants must proceed indirectly via the ring road, while walking/cycling access is direct. (Diagram courtesy of Parkin (2018), full reference at end).

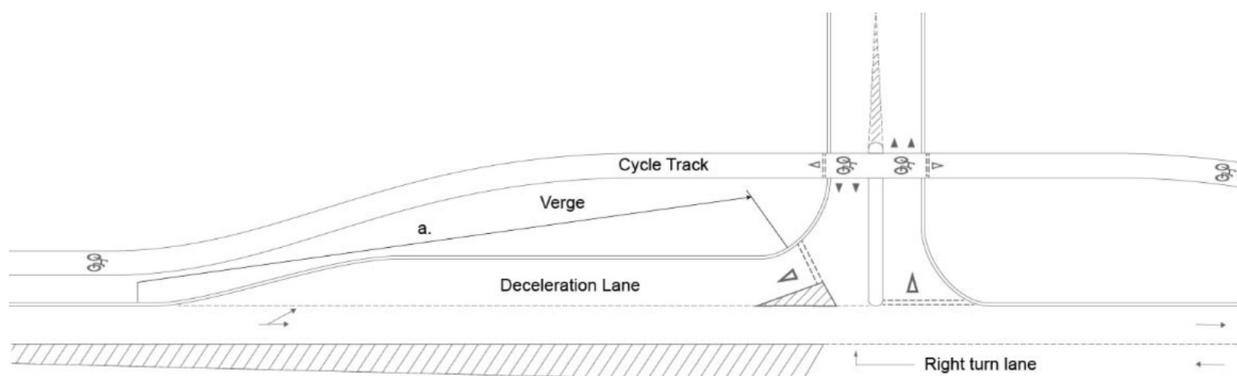
We do see some evidence of partitioning within the current Illustrative Master Plan, in parts where open spaces and parks separate the built-up areas. However this proposed design is not like Houten because (a) the primary road 'ring' of this application is too close to the centre of the site, which makes internal motor traffic trips more direct and attractive, and (b) the grid of walking/cycling routes are frequently interrupted, indirect, often socially isolated, pushed outwards, and sometimes missing entirely. Apart from the dedicated bus route, the applicants seem to be largely repeating the mistakes of Cambourne, a development that suffers from high car-dependency with very low levels of walking and cycling.

¹www.itdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/22.-092211_ITDP_NED_Desktop_Houten.pdf

Outside the site, we do not understand how the applicants have managed to examine the entire A1303/St Neots Road corridor and yet have proposed only one highly questionable 'improvement' to the so-called 'Cambridge Crossroads' junction at Coton. It is true that a signalised crossing of Madingley Road may well be appropriate here, however the geometries of the pathways as they cross both of the Cambridge Roads remain inappropriate for cycling. In particular, the crossing of Cambridge Road (Coton) requires a person cycling outbound to turn back 180 degrees in order to see any approaching vehicles while also keeping an eye in front, a contortion that is nearly impossible for many people. The existing conditions also require this, but currently most people riding on the A1303/St Neots Road route are coming from the Coton Path, avoiding the crossing in question. If the applicant intends more people to use this crossing then the geometry should be corrected in line with IAN 195/16 section 2.4.11.



The safe use of the Cambridge Road (Coton) crossing requires a person to have eyes in back of their head.



Section 2.4.11 of IAN 195/16 describes a safe side-road crossing design.

Any proposed improvements for cycling should be designed with geometry, sight-lines and parameters that are suitable for cycling, not by slapping blue signs on pavements. The A1303/St Neots Road between Bourn Airfield and Cambridge is a roadway with very poor provision for walking and cycling. If the applicants are seriously seeking to improve cycling connections to Cambridge, we can think of several additional proposals off the cuff and would welcome more. From west to east: (a) the crossing of Highfields Road just east of the site is extremely unfriendly and difficult because it is too close to a high-speed roundabout - it needs to be shifted further away with a proper refuge island as per IAN 195/16; (b) the shared-use pathway along St Neots Road is very narrow and too close to a fast road - it needs to be improved in line with IAN 195/16; (c) the cycle lanes on St Neots Road through Hardwick are too

narrow and unprotected; (d) east of Hardwick the transition from cycle lanes to shared-use path is improperly designed; (e) the shared-use path east of Hardwick is also extremely narrow and too close to a fast road; (f) the aforementioned problems with Cambridge Crossroads; (g) there is a litany of problems with Madingley Road in Cambridge, too numerous to include here. And this is not yet counting the needs of intervillage links or the future Greenway, which will both have major importance to the success of the Bourn Airfield development.

We will be minded to withdraw our objection when the applicant uploads a revised plan showing a safe, protected and prioritised network for walking and cycling within the development, as well as serious and useful proposals for connecting to the surrounding villages, towns and Cambridge. Conditions must be agreed to ensure that all walking and cycling infrastructure is open and available prior to first occupation of any dwellings and the Travel Plan must be revised to include 'hard' measures making physical changes to infrastructure that truly enable cycling for all ages and abilities. On any routes expected to have significant flow of people walking or cycling, the path should be segregated, providing ample, high-quality and separate provision for walking and cycling. We recommend that cycleway design parameters be drawn from Parkin, J. (2018) 'Designing for Cycle Traffic: international principles and practice' (Institute of Civil Engineers Publishing, London)² and Interim Advice Note (IAN) 195/16 by Highways England³.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of Camcycle

Matthew Danish,
Trustee

Further comments on the text and images

On page 17 of the Design and Access Statement the applicants claim that the Cambridge Science Park is only a 25-minute cycle ride away. We do not believe this claim. Realistically for a more average person, and choosing the two closest points to measure between, it would be closer to a 45-minute cycle ride – electric-assisted or not. Should a high quality cycle route be delivered as part of this planning application and either the Cambourne Greenway or the Cambridge 2 Cambourne project, then it might be reasonable to forecast a 35-40 minute ride. This is respectable, and there is no reason to postulate unrealistic trip times.

On page 98 of the Design and Access Statement there is a Figure 73 that purports to show an '*Attractive cycle route connecting the open space network*' but instead shows a cyclist whizzing along some grass behind a rock. We sincerely hope that the applicants do not believe that this is an example of an 'attractive cycle route' and instead intend to provide appropriate, all-weather, all-year surfaces that are easy to maintain and will withstand normal usage.

²<https://www.icevirtuallibrary.com/doi/book/10.1680/dfct.63495>

³www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/ha/standards/ians/pdfs/ian195.pdf



Figure 73 on page 98: 'attractive cycle route'?

On page 119 of the Design and Access Statement there is a Figure 104 labeled 'Strategic Cycle Route' showing a person riding along what appears to be a rural trail with unbound and dusty surface. This is not an appropriate surface for an all-weather, all-year cycleway because it will turn into mud whenever there is rain and become unusable for transport purposes.



Figure 104 on page 119: strategic cycleway or unbound rural trail?