February 2021



# PLANNING STATEMENT FORMER HOTEL FELIX, WHITEHOUSE LANE, GIRTON, CAMBS

# **Quality Assurance**

**Site name:** Former Hotel Felix, Whitehouse Lane, Girton,

Cambridgeshire CB3 0LX

Client name: Cassel Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd

Type of report: Planning Statement

Prepared by: Rebecca Smith MRTPI

Signed

Date February 2021

Reviewed by: Mike Derbyshire MRTPI

Signed M. Type Co

Date February 2021



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Appendix 1
SITE LOCATION PLAN

#### Appendix 2

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Bidwells LLP on behalf of Cassel Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd ("the Applicant") in support of a full planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new 80 bed care home (C2 Use Class) along with associated car and cycle parking, drainage and landscaping at Former Hotel Felix, Whitehouse Lane, Girton, Cambridgeshire ("the Site").
- 1.2 The majority of the Site lies within the jurisdiction of South Cambridgeshire District Council ("the Council"). A small section of the eastern boundary and access extends into Cambridge City, but no material works are being carried out within that part of the Site.
- 1.3 The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of an 80 ensuite bedroom care home with landscaped gardens, along with car and cycle parking, drainage and landscaping. The existing access from Whitehouse Lane is maintained ("the Proposed Development").

#### **The Applicant**

- 1.4 The Applicant is Cassel Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd, who own the Site as a subsidiary company of Melford Capital Partners LLP. Melford also own the University Arms Hotel in Cambridge City Centre, which they acquired in 2011, redeveloped and refurbished to much acclaim. Melford acquired Hotel Felix in 2018. With the impact of Covid-19, the hotel has now permanently closed.
- 1.5 Melford Capital Partners also own care home operator, KYN, and the Site's context and setting provides an excellent opportunity to bring the KYN care home experience to Cambridge.
- The KYN approach to care and design is unique and results in a market leading environment for those within the community living with a diagnosis dementia and/or frailty in their older years. They work closely with the Care Quality Commission to deliver purpose-built care home facilities, with high-quality internal and external environments that meet, and often exceed, regulatory and market standards. KYN provide unparalleled care to all their residents, in exceptional homes, imbued with love and warmth. The KYN experience strives to make the ordinary more extraordinary by raising the industry bar in nursing and dementia care.

#### **Purpose**

1.7 The primary purpose of this statement is to provide an assessment against the Council's Development Plan policies and other material considerations to demonstrate that the Proposed Development should be supported, and planning permission granted.

#### **Structure**

- 1.8 This statement provides the following information:
  - Section 2 overview of the site and its surroundings.
  - Section 3 description of the proposed development and key design principles.

- Section 4 overview of the relevant Development Plan policies and material considerations.
- Section 5 a comprehensive planning assessment on the principle of development and all relevant design and technical matters.
- Section 6 conclusion including a summary of the planning benefits.

### **Scope of Submission**

1.9 The planning application is supported by a suite of technical and design documents in line with the Council's local validation requirements. These documents should be read in conjunction with this statement.

DOCUMENT/DRAWING	REFERENCE/DATE	AUTHOR
Site Location Plan	A-846 06A	Carless & Adams
Existing Site Plan	A-846 05A	Carless & Adams
Existing Elevations	A-846 23A	Carless & Adams
Proposed Site Plan	A-846 04A	Carless & Adams
Proposed Main Elevations	A-846 21A	Carless & Adams
Proposed Courtyard Elevations	A-846 22A	Carless & Adams
Proposed Ground and First Floor Plan	A-846 11A	Carless & Adams
Proposed Second and Roof Floor Plan	A-846 12A	Carless & Adams
Proposed Sections	A-846 24A	Carless & Adams
Landscape General Arrangement	LD-PLN-200 A	LUC
Landscape General Arrangement	LD-PLN-201 A	LUC
Statement of Community Involvement	February 2021	Marengo
Care Home Needs Assessment	December 2020	Carterwood
Design and Access Statement	February 2021	Carless & Adams
Heritage Statement	February 2021	Bidwells Heritage
LVA and Green Belt Assessment	February 2021	Bidwells UDS
Health Impact Assessment (Ext.	February 2021	Bidwells
Transport Statement	November 2020	Bright Plan
Framework Travel Plan	November 2020	Bright Plan
Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage	February 2021 Rev P3	ARC
Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Desk	December 2020	Solmek
Phase 2 Site Investigation	December 2020	Solmek
Tree Survey Constraints Plan	8100-D-CP	Hayden's
Energy Strategy Statement	February 2021	Harniss Consulting
Utilities Statement	February 2021	Harniss Consulting

DOCUMENT/DRAWING	REFERENCE/DATE	AUTHOR
Ventilation Statement	February 2021	Harniss Consulting
Water Conservation Statement	February 2021	Harniss Consulting
Ecological Assessment	October 2020	Ecology Solutions
Biodiversity Net Gain Report	February 2021	Ecology Solutions
Acoustic Assessment	6th January 2021	Sharpes Redmore
Lighting Report	February 2021 Rev A	Foundry
Archaeology Report	January 2021	Andrew Josephs
Sustainability Statement	February 2021 Rev C	Hoare Lea

# 2.0 Background

#### **Site Description**

2.1 The Site covers an area of approximately 1.39 hectares, comprising existing buildings and associated parking, access and landscaped grounds. The Site is accessed from the south-east via an existing circa 5.5m wide bellmouth adjoining Whitehouse Lane off Huntingdon Road (A1307). A copy of the Site Location Plan is enclosed at Appendix 1.



Figure 1: Extract of aerial image showing site location (Google Maps)

- 2.2 The existing buildings comprise an original Victorian villa with later extensions in the form of single storey and two storey wings to the side and rear and a separate office building. The original building has been heavily altered through demolition, extension and alteration both internally and externally. Original elements of the building, such as the glass house, have been demolished and have been replaced with modest quality additions. The Heritage Statement accompanying the application concludes that the building has low significance and a low heritage value overall.
- 2.3 The remainder of the Site is surfaced with a combination of soft landscaping, asphalt roadways and paved/gravel footpaths. The southeast of the Site, adjacent Whitehouse Lane, comprises a hard-surfaced car parking area.
- 2.4 There are a variety of mature trees within the Site, including some subject to a Tree Preservation Order (see accompanying Tree Survey). The Site is relatively well-enclosed with mature tree belts and hedgerows present along its boundaries.

#### **Site Constraints**

#### **Green Belt**

2.5 The Site lies in the Cambridge Green Belt. It is identified within a sub-area of the Green Belt known as the 'Girton Gap'1. The Girton Gap comprises a strip of open space, mostly consisting of sports pitches and the hotel, that separates Girton village from the edge of Cambridge.

#### Landscape Character

2.6 The Site lies within Landscape Character 2A Fen Edge: Western Fen Edge.

#### **Heritage Assets**

- 2.7 The Site does not comprise any Listed Buildings, nor is it within or near to a Conservation Area.
- The accompanying Heritage Statement concludes that the existing building has a low level of significance and historic value. The building has been heavily altered through demolition, extension and alteration both internally and externally, including building and structures within its grounds. As a result of its heavy adaptation, Felix Hotel is considered to hold a low level of significance overall. This assessment takes into account the internal significance of all floor levels including the alterations, loss of features and the alterations which have occurred externally. A Certificate of Immunity from Listing was issued by Historic England in 2020.

#### Flood Risk

2.9 The Site lies in Flood Zone 1 with the lowest probability of flooding and therefore suitable for residential development (as shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning).

#### Trees and Hedgerows

2.10 A Tree Preservation Order (Number 27/03/SC) covers some individual trees and grouping of trees located on the Site's peripheries. The accompanying Tree Survey identifies a significant amount of Category A, B and C trees, ranging from high to low quality, within the Site.

#### **Public Rights of Way**

2.11 There are no Public Rights of Way within the Site. However, Public Footpath 39/48 runs north-south along Whitehouse Lane immediately adjacent the site and crosses over the site access. Northwards, Footpath 39/48 divides into Footpath 135/5, which runs north-eastwards towards Histon Road and Footpath 99/13, which runs circa 250-300m from the northern boundary of the



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Inner Green Belt Boundary Study (2015) prepared by LDA Design on behalf of the Council

Site, east-west along the northern boundary of the Howes Sports Ground connecting into Thornton Close.

2.12 Huntingdon Road also forms part of SUSTRANS National Cycle Route 51.

#### **Ecology**

- 2.13 There are no County Wildlife Sites (CWS) or statutorily protected sites that are likely to be impacted due to the proposed development, Although, the Site sits within the impact zone of a nearby Traveller's Rest Pit SSSI, it does not meet the criteria which would require an automatic consultation from Natural England due to the nature of the Proposed Development.
- 2.14 An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site was carried out by Ecology Solutions in July 2020, with specific surveys completed for badgers and bats. No overriding ecology constraints to the proposed redevelopment of the Site were identified, subject to standard mitigation measures.

#### Site Planning History

2.15 Table 1 below provides a summary of the most relevant planning history for the Site as identified through a review of the Council's online planning application records:

Table 1: Planning History

LPA REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	STATUS
S/4502/17/FL	Proposed development and extension to provide new reception area and 16no. additional bedrooms.	Approved 26th February 2018
S/0297/08/F	Extensions	Approved on 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2008
S/0817/00/F	Conversion, part demolition and extensions to form a 48-bedroomed hotel	Approved on 21st August 2002

2.16 In February 2018, full planning permission was granted to infill the existing east and west wings (modern extensions) to provide additional bedroom accommodation. This comprised an additional 502.6m² of internal floor space, creating an internal courtyard layout within the hotel. The increase in building footprint was deemed acceptable in terms of Green Belt impact. An extract of the approved site layout is provided at Figure 3 below.



Figure 2: Extract of approved Ground Floor Plan (LPA ref: S/4502/17/FL)

#### **Surrounding Area**

2.17 To the north of the Site, lies Howe Close Sports Ground, which benefits from a full planning permission (LPA ref: S/2084/16/F varied by S/3406/18/NM) for the development of sports facilities, including provision of a new modern sports pavilion, two artificially lit pitches, two grass pitches and provision of new parking facilities.



Figure 3: Extract of approved Site Layout under S/3406/18/NM and 3D visual of pavilion building

- 2.18 The new two-storey sports pavilion will replace the existing one-storey building and was deemed acceptable development in the Green Belt.
- 2.19 To the east of the Site, lies Whitehouse Lane, with a mixture of two and three storey commercial and residential buildings beyond. To the north and west of the Site, lies the rear gardens of residential properties fronting onto Thornton Close and The Brambles. To the south of the Site, lies a parcel of private grassland fronting onto Huntingdon Road, owned by Anglia Ruskin University.

In terms of the Site's wider context, the strategic development site, North West Cambridge (Eddington), lies to the south of the Site. Eddington benefits from outline planning permission for up to 3000 dwellings, along with new student bedspaces, employment, retail, educational and community facilities and is well under construction. To the east of the Site, Darwin Green 1 has planning permission for up to 1593 dwellings, primary school, community and retail facilities and is under construction. In addition, to the north-east of the Site, lies Darwin Green 2 and 3, which is allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 for up to 1,100 dwellings, with a planning application expected to be submitted later this year.



Figure 4: Extract of aerial image showing surrounding developments.

#### **Accessibility**

- 2.21 There are a number of local amenities and services located within Girton, including a Coop shop, pharmacy, two churches (Baptist and Church of England), primary school, 3 nurseries, several pubs and restaurants, recreation ground, multi-use games area, tennis club, sports pavilion, two community centres, allotments, bowling green, publicly accessible open space and woodland and doctors surgery (Satellite of Huntingdon Road Practice). Eddington, to the south of Huntingdon Road offers a supermarket, Argos (with collection point) bakery / café, community centre, nursery and primary school and a local centre in which most units are as yet unlet. Darwin Green will also include a full complement of social infrastructure once built.
- 2.22 The 'Lawrence Weaver' bus stops (northbound and southbound) are situated on Whitehouse Lane c.280m to the south of the Site. The stops are served by the 5 Citi and 6 Citi buses which provide frequent services to Cambridge city centre.
- 2.23 Cambridge railway station is situated c.4.5km to the north of the Site and is accessible by bus or cycle.

#### Pre-application discussions and stakeholder engagement

2.24 Prior to the submission of the application, the Applicant engaged in extensive discussions with the Council, local councillors and the general public. Further detail is provided in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement, with a brief summary provided below.

#### **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

- 2.25 The Applicant sought pre-application advice from the Council between May 2020 January 2021, comprising:
  - Initial high-level meeting with Sharon Brown, Assistant Director Delivery held on 27th May 2020.
  - Pre-app 1: Meeting held with planning case officer, urban design officer and landscape officer on 4th August 2020, with written advice provided in letter dated 9th September 2020.
  - Pre-app 2: Meeting held with planning case officer, urban design officer and landscape officer on 19th October 2020, with written advice provided in letter dated 16th November 2020.
  - Presentation to the Design Enabling Panel on the 13th January 2021.
- 2.26 The Council advised that the proposal in principle is acceptable as there is a need in the District for care homes as detailed in their Housing for our Future, Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023. However, the Council requested further detail and justification was submitted with the planning application on the following matters:
  - Loss of hotel and need for a care home
  - Green Belt impact
  - Loss of existing building
- 2.27 The application is supported by a Care Home Needs Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment and Green Belt Review and Existing Building Analysis. These matters are also discussed within this statement.
- 2.28 In response to original design comments received from officers, the scheme was amended by:
  - Siting the building further away from the northern boundary to create more space and further enhance the outlook from the bedrooms;
  - Siting the building further to the west to increase the setback of the building from the entrance to the Site;
  - Adding glazed links to break up and add relief to the building line; and
  - Relocating the car parking area northwards and breaking it up with new soft landscaping to minimise the visual impact from Whitehouse Lane.
- 2.29 The Applicant and representatives from the project team presented the emerging proposals to South Cambridgeshire's Design Enabling Panel on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The accompanying Design and Access Statement provides a summary of how the feedback has been addressed.



#### **County and Local Ward Councillors**

- 2.30 In summary, the Applicant and representatives from their design team also met and briefed:
  - Ward Councillors Tom Bycott and Douglas De Lacey.
  - Councillor Lynda Harford, county divisional member for Bar Hill, Dry Drayton, Girton and Lolworth.
  - Will Patten, Service Director: Commissioning People and Community Services at Cambridgeshire County Councillors
  - Girton Parish Council.

#### **Public Consultation**

- 2.31 The Applicant has also engaged with the local community via:
  - A public consultation website: www.kyncambridge.co.uk and feedback facility;
  - A four-page consultation brochure sent to 800 residential and commercial addresses;
  - Two 90-minute online consultation events on 20th and 21st January 2021; and
  - Sharing the consultation brochure with relevant local community groups.

## 3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The Proposed Development comprises the construction of a new 80 en-suite bed care home, with associated gardens, car and cycle parking and new landscaping. The existing access from Whitehouse Lane will provide vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access to the Site.

#### **Background**

- The KYN approach to care and design is unique and results in a market leading environment for those within the community living with a diagnosis dementia and/or frailty in their older years. They work closely with the Care Quality Commission to deliver purpose-built care home facilities, with high-quality internal and external environments that meet, and often exceed, regulatory and market standards. KYN provide unparalleled care to all their residents, in exceptional homes, imbued with love and warmth. The KYN experience strives to make the ordinary more extraordinary by raising the industry bar in nursing and dementia care.
- 3.3 The new building will provide residential care, dementia care and 24-hour nursing care, with 40 of the 80 bedrooms devoted to specialist dementia care.
- 3.4 KYN have created a new, cutting-edge and research-led dementia programme, enabling their residents to continue to enjoy the highest quality of life possible. Their highly experienced, compassionate team provide a research-led dementia environment, which is designed around the needs of their residents. This enables those with physical fragilities and dementia to live in a meaningful and immersive space.
- 3.5 The average age of the care home resident will be 85-87 years old.
- 3.6 KYN homes provide residents with:
  - Fine dining cultivated to five-star hotel standards, with daily changing menus focused on fresh, seasonal, and organic ingredients.
  - A Professional Hair and Beauty Salon.
  - A spa and wellbeing centre offering treatments, therapies and wellbeing.
  - Beautifully Curated Sensory Gardens.
  - A Comfortable Cinema Room.
  - Personalised health reviews on a regular basis, performed by leading doctors and nutritionists
  - Well designed and appointed rooms
- 3.7 KYN Cambridge will employ circa 115 members of staff based on shift patterns, providing a variety of management, nursing, caring, housekeeping and service roles.

#### **Care Home Building and Gardens**

3.8 The care home will comprise a new circa 4,665sqm (GIFA) purpose-built two and half storey building set around an internal courtyard, providing 80 en-suite bedrooms, communal and servicing areas, including a dementia excellence learning centre and spa. A copy of the Proposed Site Plan is enclosed at Appendix 2, with an extract shown below.



Figure 5: Extract of Proposed Site Plan A-846 04A (not to scale)

- 3.9 The ground floor comprises 40 bedrooms with resident gardens, communal and service areas, including a 'Great Room' for communal dining. The first floor features a dementia excellence learning centre and spa, with 40 bedrooms devoted to dementia care. Further service areas are located on the top floor within the roof space.
- 3.10 The care home will include a Great Room, orangery and library on the ground floor- main communal lounge/ dining facilities to cater for all residents and function as a central hub. There will also be a dedicated wellbeing centre with SPA, hair and beauty salon, reception and waiting area.
- 3.11 Residents will have access to a variety of communal amenity spaces, including large landscaped garden, central courtyard and first floor roof terraces. Residents will also have access to internal communal areas distributed at key areas of the house, providing views towards the front of the site and towards the back and side gardens
- 3.12 31no. car parking spaces, including two disabled bays located adjacent the main entrance, are proposed. 22 cycle parking spaces will be provided within a secure and covered store adjacent the service entrance.

#### **Access**

- 3.13 The existing vehicular access from Whitehouse Lane will provide vehicular, cycling and pedestrian access to the Site. The Transport Statement prepared by Bright Plan confirms that the existing access is suitable for the proposed care home use. The access allows for concurrent car movements and accommodates access by emergency and service vehicles. Vehicle swept path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate how fire tenders (the largest emergency vehicle), ambulances and large refuse vehicles can safely and suitably access the Site and the internal road, performing turning manoeuvres and exiting in forward gear.
- Pedestrian access to the Site would be served from a 1.5m wide footway along the southern side of the site access, tying in with the existing footway along Whitehouse Lane.

#### Layout, Scale and Appearance

- 3.15 The Design and Access Statement prepared by Carless & Adam provides an explanation of the design evolution of the Site, and how the Proposed Development accords with industry Care Quality Commission and best practice standards.
- 3.16 The new building is sited within the footprint of the existing building but is set-back slightly further into the Site. The existing access and car parking area has been reconfigured, with the amount of parking and hard-standing reduced, allowing for a significant increase in soft landscaping at the entrance of the Site.



Figure 6: Extract of eastern elevation A (drawing A-846-21A) (not to scale)

3.17 The building has been designed with a neo-classical aesthetic with the use of sash windows, deep eaves, cornice detailing and a portico creating visual interest. A palette of traditional materials currently present on the Site, such as buff brick with stone detailing to windows and door openings, will be repeated in the new building, to retain a distinctive architectural character.

#### **Landscaping and Biodiversity**

3.18 A new hard and soft landscaping scheme has been designed for the Site by LUC. The landscape scheme has been carefully designed to meet the needs of the care home residents, whilst building upon the existing landscape features and enhancing the local green infrastructure network.

- 3.19 The design is split into a number of elements: the drive & arrival court, meadow/orchard, sensory garden, the lawns, woodland buffer, terraces and courtyard. These areas will use high-quality materials and planting palettes. The landscaping also intends to incorporate stone architectural features from the existing building as well as the coade stone dog and gazebo.
- The landscape design includes the retention of 62no. trees, relocation of existing semi-mature trees, provision of new trees and 1km of new hedgerow and herbaceous planting. The scheme also includes the seeding of 0.43ha of wildflower meadow and the establishment of fruit trees as a small orchard. In addition, nesting boxes, bat/bug boxes and log piles will also be incorporated into the scheme and within the design of the building, two areas of biodiverse roofs comprising pre-sown wildflower mats. all of which are encouraged by the Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership Developing with Nature Toolkit.
- 3.21 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment prepared by Ecology Solutions uses the Biodiversity Metric 2.0 to calculate a net gain of 74.49% in habitats and 38.72% gain in linear features based on the proposed landscaping scheme.

#### **Drainage**

- 3.22 A proposed surface water drainage strategy has been designed by ARC Engineers based on sustainable urban drainage principles. The surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be restricted to pre-development Greenfield rates for the whole site.
- 3.23 Infiltration tests show that soakaways will not be possible and there are no watercourses within the site boundary or bordering the site to discharge the surface water into. Therefore, it is proposed to reuse the existing connection into the Anglian Water surface water sewer within Whitehouse Lane from the site to discharge the surface water runoff.
- 3.24 The surface water system will be designed to accommodate flows on-site up to and including the 1 in 100-year critical duration event, with a 40% allowance for climate change. A total storage capacity of up to 400m³ will be provided and the system will have a flow control device limiting surface water discharge to Qbar 3.5 l/s.
- 3.25 Based on a review of the suitability of the SUDs components, it is proposed that the development will incorporate the following:
  - Lined permeable paving to car parking area in order to provide a level of treatment and local storage;
  - Attenuation tank below ground to provide runoff storage, with a flow control system; and
  - Utilise the extensive soft landscaping as bioretention to reduce peak flows and volumes, where practicable to do so.
- The foul drainage will connect to the existing foul sewer that runs south towards Huntingdon Road, through the adjacent land.

#### **Benefits**

- 3.27 The proposed redevelopment of the Site provides the following planning economic, social and environmental benefits:
  - Securing a future use for the Site and making efficient use of previously developed land,
     rather than allowing the site to become redundant;
  - Provision of a purpose-built care home in an attractive setting and a sustainable location to meet an increasing need for specialist C2 accommodation, especially dementia care, in South Cambridgeshire;
  - Provision of an exceptionally high quality internal and external environment for residential, nursing and dementia care and support for the families who can be comforted that their parents, grandparents or family members are receiving the highest standards of care;
  - Provision of a Dementia Excellence Learning Centre which will provide training and research into dementia care, helping to upskill the sub regional population and support the voluntary sector;
  - Provision of an energy efficient building, which reduces carbon emissions, along with integrating other design measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change through increase of green infrastructure, biodiversity and SUDS;
  - A net gain in biodiversity of 74.49% in habitat units and 38.72% in hedgerow units through new tree and hedgerow planting and creation of wildflower meadows and orchard areas, along with provision of bird and bat nesting boxes, log piles and biodiverse roof mats;
  - Contribution to the Council's five-year housing land supply, with a consequential effect of releasing existing housing stock into the market; and
  - Economic benefits arising from a variety of permanent and temporary jobs to manage, staff
    and operate the care home, along with creating new jobs within the construction and supply
    chain activity.

# 4.0 Development Plan and Material Considerations

#### **Development Plan**

4.1 The adopted Development Plan comprises the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) ("Local Plan"). The Local Plan Policies Map (2018) extract below shows the Site within the Cambridge Green Belt (as shown in green) and outside the development framework for Girton (dashed black line). There are no other policy designations covering the Site.



Figure 7: Extract of Local Plan Policies Map (2018)

- 4.2 The following Local Plan policies are relevant to the Proposed Development and will be discussed within Section 5: Planning Assessment in greater detail:
  - S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
  - S/4: Cambridge Green Belt
  - S/7: Development Frameworks
  - CC/1: Mitigation and Adaption to Climate Change
  - CC/3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
  - CC/4: Water Efficiency
  - CC/6: Construction Methods
  - CC/8: Sustainable Drainage Systems
  - CC/9: Managing Flood Risk
  - HQ/1: Design Principles
  - NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
  - NH/4: Biodiversity

- NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt
- NH/9: Redevelopment of Previously Development Sites and Infilling in in the Green Belt
- NH/14: Heritage Assets
- H/9: Housing Mix
- Policy T1/3: Parking Standards

#### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 4.3 The following Supplementary Planning Documents are material considerations relevant to the Proposed Development:
  - Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020) contains further guidance and a
    checklist covering energy, water, climate change, biodiversity, light pollution, contamination,
    noise, air quality, odour, flood risk, heritage, construction waste etc.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework 2019**

- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) is a key material consideration. It is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.5 In terms of new development in the Green Belt, paragraph 145 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, unless this includes:
  - "g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority."



## 5.0 Planning Assessment

#### **Principle of Development**

- 5.1 The Site comprises previously developed land on the edge of Cambridge City within the Green Belt. Local Plan Policy S/6 sets a preference for new jobs and homes to be located on the edge of Cambridge, having regard to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt. The Site is a sustainable location for a new care home and the Council advised at the pre-application stage that the proposal in principle could be supported.
- 5.2 The key matters relating to the principle of development include:
  - Need for care home and dementia care
  - Appropriateness of redevelopment in the Green Belt
  - Demolition of the existing building
  - Impact on employment
- 5.3 Each of these matters is discussed in turn below.

#### Need for care home accommodation

- 5.4 The Council confirmed within their pre-application advice that "there is a need in the District for care homes as detailed in the Housing for our future, Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023".
- The application is supported by a Care Home Needs Assessment prepared by Carterwood, which concludes that by 2023, the earliest the proposed care home could be available, there will be an unmet need for 99 market standard care home beds within South Cambridgeshire. This shortfall is expected to increase to an unmet need of 237 market standard beds by 2033 reflecting the sustained and escalating nature of need.
- 5.6 More significantly, the assessment shows an <u>unmet need for 240 market standard dedicated</u> dementia care home beds by 2023. It is common ground within Cambridgeshire that there is a critical shortfall of dementia care beds.
- 5.7 The assessment also shows that the unmet need for care home beds offering full ensuite wet rooms is even greater, with an identified need for a further 365 beds, including 251 dedicated dementia beds, by 2023.
- The Proposed Development will make a significant contribution in addressing the shortfall in general needs care beds, the critical shortfall in dementia care and the even greater shortfall in ensuite wet room provision. This is a significant material consideration, which weighs heavily in favour of the Proposed Development.

#### Appropriateness of redevelopment within the Green Belt

- Local Plan Policy S/4 states that new development in the Green Belt will only be approved in accordance with Green Belt policy in the NPPF. Local Plan Policy NH/9 and limb g) of paragraph 145 of the NPPF state that the redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use, would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, if the proposed development does "not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development".
- 5.10 In addition, Local Plan Policy NH/8 states that any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed, so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt. Further, where development is permitted landscaping conditions will ensure the impact on Green Belt is mitigated.

Impact on openness of the Green Belt

- 5.11 There is no definition of 'openness' set out within the NPPF. Case law, however, has provided some clarity on the interpretation and application of 'openness'. In Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 2015, it was deemed that 'openness' is not 'narrowly limited to [a] volumetric approach" and that the visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of 'openness' and how it relates to the capacity of the Green Belt to fulfil its purposes. More recently, in Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others v North Yorkshire County Council 2020, it was reiterated that visual effects should be given appropriate weight when it is a relevant consideration for the assessment of the impact on the Green Belt's openness.
- Whilst there is an increase in footprint and volume, as Turner and Smith make clear, this is not the prevailing element in determining the impact on openness in this case. The new care home building has been carefully designed so that the existing sprawling and elongated wings of the hotel building are brought into a more cohesive and compact form of development. This results in the proposed care home building having a 13% smaller external perimeter (249m) than the existing building (298m). This not only improves the visual impact but also reduces the perception of built form within the Site, thereby enhancing the 'undeveloped' qualities of the Green Belt.

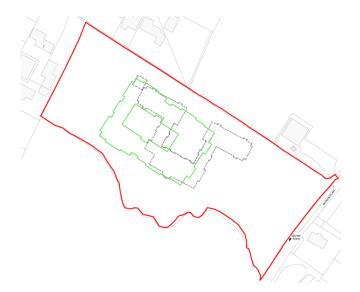


Figure 8:Comparison between footprints of existing building (grey) and proposed building (green)

At a local scale, the Council's Inner Green Belt Study (2015) indicates that the key role of this part of the Green Belt is to provide separation between Girton and Cambridge urban areas. Since the Green Belt was established in this part of Cambridge, the purpose of the 'Girton Gap' has been noticeably improved. For instance, in 1977, when the Site operated as an adult care centre, there were substantial buildings and parking present (see Figure 9 below). The proposed care home building is proposed to be located further north-west into the Site, thus improving the key purpose of this part of the Green Belt and its openness even further.

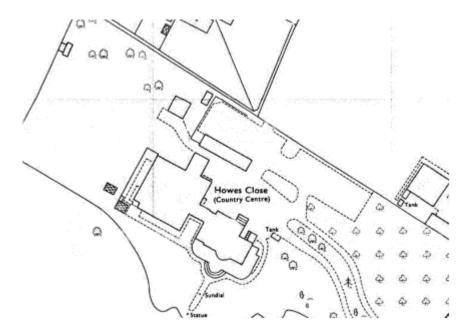


Figure 9: Extract of map from 1977



Figure 10: Extract of visualisation of the proposed building (blue) from Whitehouse Lane (see Landscape and Visual Assessment and Green Belt Review prepared by Bidwells

- 5.14 In summary, the Proposed Development will improve the openness of the Green Belt, because:
  - The Site and its surrounds are characterised by a strong sense of enclosure due to the established hedgerows, tree belts and the existing/emerging built form. However, where there

- is a visual appreciation of the proposed development, its contained form and setback improves the Green Belt's openness, allowing for deep views into the Site's landscape.
- The perceived built form is less intrusive than the existing as a result of its compact form and relocation towards the north-west of the Site. Thereby, the gap between the urban edges is increased and the local quality of openness of the Green Belt related to undeveloped land is improved.
- 5.15 The Proposed Development therefore constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with Local Plan policies NH/8 and NH/9 and Paragraph 145g of the NPPF.

Very Special Circumstances

5.16 Notwithstanding the above, if the Proposed Development were to be considered by the Council as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, then the Applicant would argue that 'Very Special Circumstances' ("VSC") exist to outweigh any potential harm (as per Paragraph 144 of the NPPF). In this case, the growing unmet need for high-quality, modern care home beds and the critical need for specialist dementia care constitute VSC. The Council accepted that unmet need constituted VSC in the granting of planning permission for the construction of a new care home in the Green Belt in Fulbourn (LPA ref: S/3418/17/FL).

#### **Demolition of existing buildings**

- Policy NH/14 seeks to sustain and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the district's historic environment. To establish the historical value of the existing buildings, an assessment of the building's significance in accordance with Paragraph 189 of the NPPF is set out within the accompanying Heritage Statement. The assessment takes into account the internal significance of all floor levels including the alterations, loss of features and the alterations which have occurred externally. It is concluded that the building has a low significance and heritage value. This assessment of significance was agreed by the Council's Historic Officer at the preapplication stage.
- 5.18 The building has not been identified by the Council as a designated or non-designated heritage asset. Even if the building was to be identified by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset, the loss of the building would have such a low significance that the benefits would more than outweigh any harm in accordance with the test set out in Paragraph 196 of the NPPF.
- Notwithstanding the building's low heritage value, the Applicant and their design team analysed various options to retain and reuse the original Victorian villa, including façade retention, as a starting point of the design process. The accompanying Design and Access Statement documents the assessment of various options in terms of their suitability and viability to provide care facilities to the standards deemed essential by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Building Regulations, and to meet the HAPPI design principles; as well as to ensure no greater impact on the Green Belt.
- There would need to be substantial internal reconfiguration and structural work to the building due to numerous changes in levels both inside and outside the building; the corridor widths do not allow for two wheelchair users to pass; and there is no space to retrofit a platform/stair-lift, so steps would need to be converted to ramps. Furthermore, retaining elements of the existing building would necessitate a design approach that would increase built form within the Green Belt

and reduce the separation distance to neighbouring properties. The cost of all assessed options was prohibitive to delivering a new care home.

5.21 Although the existing building cannot be retained or modified to accommodate the needs of a specialist nursing and dementia care home, it is possible to build back with beauty, with an elegant and historic design that emulates the existing building. The new building also provides an energy-efficient building, which is fit for purpose as a modern, high-quality care home.

#### Impact on employment

The retention of the C1 hotel use is not afforded any protection under Local Plan policy, but it is the Council's policy to protect jobs. The new care home will provide a net increase in new jobs, generating around 115 direct jobs. The new jobs will offer a variety of roles (see Figure 11), with a mix of full and part time opportunities. KYN has a commitment to on-the-job training and a locally focused recruitment strategy to maximise the potential for local people to access these jobs.

POSITION	FT	PT	POSITION	FT	PT
Manager	1		Spa staff	1	1
Deputy	1		Hostess		
Administrator / Secretary	1		Laundry	2	1
Nurse	8		Housekeeper	1	
Senior Carer	14		Driver	1	1
Carer	36	2	Domestics	4	
Activities officers	1	1	Maintenance	2	
Head chef	1		Concierge	1	
Deputy chef	3		Home sales admin	1	
Kitchen assistant	3		Hospitality Manager	1	
Bar staff	2	2			
Waiter	7	3			
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT = 92 fulltime and 11 part-time roles					

Figure 11: Summary of indicative employment creation

- In addition to onsite jobs, the Dementia Research Centre will provide training and research into dementia care, helping to upskill the sub regional population and support the voluntary sector. There will also be a number of indirect jobs created through the construction work and the supply chain.
- 5.24 The creation of new jobs is a significant benefit of the Proposed Development.

#### Conclusion

5.25 As outlined above, the Site is a sustainable location for a care home and there is an existing and growing need for new care provision, especially for specialist dementia care, within the district.

The new building replaces an existing building of low heritage value with a more compact form of

development, constituting appropriate development in the Green Belt. The principle of development thus accords with the Development Plan.

#### Other Matters

#### **Access and Transport**

- 5.26 The existing access off Whitehouse Lane provides safe and suitable access for the proposed new use as demonstrated within the accompanying Transport Statement.
- 5.27 In terms of traffic generation, the Proposed Development will result in a net reduction of 70 daily vehicle movements, including a reduction of 10 movements during the AM peak traffic hour, and 12 movements during the PM peak traffic hour.
- 5.28 Policy T1/3: 'Parking Standards' requires an indicative provision of 1 car parking space per 3 bed spaces and 1 car parking space per residential staff member. This equates to an indicative requirement for 27 car parking spaces. The Proposed Development includes provision of 31 car parking spaces. The level proposed also accords with the experience of demand and the sustainability of the Site's location in terms of offering alternatives to the private car for staff and visitors.
- The policy also sets out minimum cycle parking standard, with 1 cycle space required per 2 staff working at the same time. Based on an indicative staff rota, the Proposed Development would generate a requirement for approximately 22 cycle spaces. It is proposed to accommodate these cycle spaces within a secure and sheltered cycle store situated close to the service entrance.
- A Framework Travel Plan has also been submitted with the application to outline measures to promote greener, cleaner travel choices by reducing reliance on the use of the private car by staff and visitors. The principle target of the Travel Plan is to achieve a 10% reduction in vehicle trips to the site. Owing to the site's location and the good access to bus stops and cycle lanes, it is expected that the reduction in vehicle trips to the site by staff would be redistributed to either cycle or public transport trips. It is expected that the 17-vehicle trip reduction would be redistributed to other modes of travel. Measures and initiatives such as provision of travel information packs, promotion of car sharing and walking and cycling benefits. The effectiveness of the measures would be managed and monitored by an appointed Travel Plan Co-ordinator, with reviews on an annual basis for an initial 5-year period.

#### Trees, Hedgerows and Biodiversity

- Policy NH/4: 'Biodiversity' states that new development must aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. The Proposed Development's design seeks to maintain and enhance as many of the existing ecological and landscape features on the Site, as well as achieving the creation of new habitats. In summary:
  - Existing hedgerows on the Site are to be retained and enhanced with additional native planting wherever possible;
  - All trees covered by the TPO are retained;
  - Any loss of tree is compensated through new tree planting;

- Replacement bat roosting opportunities are be provided in suitable locations throughout the Site in the form of a selection of bat boxes, which could be integrated into proposed buildings and installed upon suitable retained trees; and
- New planting of native species, including wildflower meadow and fruit trees.
- Overall, the redevelopment of the Site offers the opportunity to achieve a biodiversity net gain of 74% in new habitats and 37% gain in linear features e.g. hedgerows. Therefore, the Proposed Development fully accords with Policy NH/4 and has the additional benefit of achieving a significant net gain in biodiversity.

#### Flood Risk and Drainage

- In accordance with Policy CC/9: 'Managing Flood Risk', the application is supported by a sitespecific Flood Risk Assessment and a proposed surface water drainage strategy based on Sustainable Urban Drainage principles. It demonstrates that the Proposed Development would not result in flood risk on the Site or elsewhere.
- 5.34 The proposed drainage strategy also protects and enhances water quality by providing adequate infrastructure, with pollution controls, in accordance with Policy CC/7 Water Quality.

#### Contamination

A Phase 1 Desk Study identified potential sources of contamination from construction/demolition waste and possible oils/fuel from vehicles spills and potential for asbestos from previous/existing building materials. A ground gas assessment was also recommended as made ground anticipated. As part of the recommended Phase 2 Site Investigation, a series of borehole testing, gas monitoring, geotechnical and chemical testing was undertaken. The assessments confirm that the Site is suitable for the proposed C2 use, subject to standard mitigation measures.

#### Noise

The Noise Assessment accompanying the application confirms that the Proposed Development is 'Low Risk' in terms of noise impacts. It concludes that good acoustic design measures have been implemented where practicable, with internal noise levels achieved using the building envelope. The details of any noise impacts from new external plant can be dealt with via a suitable planning condition.

#### Sustainability and Climate Change

- In accordance with Policy CC/1: 'Mitigation and Adaption to Climate Change' and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020), the Sustainability Statement prepared by Hoare Lea demonstrates how the Proposed Development embeds the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation relative to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development. All measures have been carefully evaluated to ensure that they are compatible with the proposed C2 use and would not give rise to any health and safety issues for residents.
- 5.38 In summary, the Proposed Development will seek to incorporate the following:

- High levels of energy efficiency (Building Regulations);
- Use of renewable and low carbon energy, where feasible;
- Recycling and waste reduction both during construction and occupation;
- Manage and conserve water resources, including a minimum water efficiency equivalent to 110 litres per person per day;
- Use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and ensuring flood risk from all sources has been avoided or managed;
- Use layout, building orientation, design, and materials to ensure properties are not susceptible to overheating and include open space and vegetation for shading and cooling, and to detain surface water run-off; and
- Conserve and enhance the habitat network.
- Policy CC/3: 'Renewable and Low Carbon in New Developments' requires a reduction in carbon emissions by a minimum of 10% through the use of on-site renewable energy and low carbon technologies. The accompanying Energy Strategy Report follows the recognised energy hierarchy to "Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green", i.e. to minimise the building's energy usage before applying renewable technologies to the design. It confirms that a 10% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions can be achieved.
- Policy CC/4: 'Water Efficiency' requires all new developments to achieve a minimum water efficiency equivalent to 110 litres per person per day. The accompanying Water Conservation and Management Statement sets out a strategy focusing on resource reduction, along with efficient use and recycling of water to achieve the minimum water efficiency standards. It confirms that the minimum water efficiency requirements can be met.
- Policy CC/6: 'Construction Methods' seeks the careful management of construction materials and waste and traffic. The accompanying Sustainability Statement sets out the Applicant's commitment to best practice construction methods, including registration to the Considerate Constructors scheme. As standard practice, the Applicant agrees to a pre-commencement planning condition to secure the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar document.

#### **Health Impact Assessment**

- Policy SC/2: 'Health Impact Assessment' requires new development to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of new and existing residents. In accordance with the policy, the application is supported by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The HIA shows that the most prominent health benefits relate to the provision of:
  - 115 on site jobs. The mix of full and part time opportunities, diversity of roles, operator's
    commitment to on-the-job training and a locally focused recruitment strategy maximises the
    potential for local people to access these jobs. This employment will contribute to reducing
    poverty and illness, encourage personal and social esteem and aid recovery from physical
    and mental illnesses.
  - The Dementia Research Centre, which will provide a permanent training and research into dementia care, helping to upskill the sub regional population, support the voluntary sector and deliver better outcomes for people with dementia.

- A healthy work environment designed to ensure healthy air, thermal control, sustainable light and a generous staffing ratio that can help reduce illness and stress.
- Facilities onsite provide an extensive range of opportunities to encourage residents' social
  interaction and engagement with the wider community, helping to prevent loneliness, support
  the mental health of residents and reduce associated physical illness.
- A range of green spaces within the development, designed specifically for elderly and those
  with dementia, as well as building design that maximises views of the gardens provides all
  residents with therapeutic space as well as opportunities for maintaining and improving
  mental and physical health.
- Inhouse transport services and staff chaperoning will enable residents to access health and social care beyond the home. The ease of access to care will reduce stress and improve take up of health services which is likely to have a positive impact on health outcomes.
- Facilities and staff that potentially reduce demand on some external health and social care services, as compared to 80 individuals in separate residences seeking services. Thus, conserving health care resources for other patients and potentially improving their health outcomes.
- Community outreach events that support those with dementia and their carers helping to reduce stress.
- 5.43 The Proposed Development will have a positive impact on new and existing residents in accordance with Policy SC/2.

#### Design

- Policy HQ/1 'Design Principles' requires all new development to be of a high-quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context. Policy H/9 'Housing Mix' further states that developments for specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) will need to demonstrate appropriate design standards.
- The accompanying Design and Access Statement explains how the proposed care home has been designed in accordance with the latest regulatory standards and best practice guidance, including the HAPPI design principles. The building's form and scale also respond to the Site's location within the Cambridge Green Belt. The Proposed Development is of a high-quality design and will make a positive contribution to its context. It accords with the criteria set out in Policy HQ/1.

### 6.0 Conclusion

- This Planning Statement has been prepared by Bidwells LLP in support of a full planning application for the proposed redevelopment of the former Hotel Felix site to provide a new purpose-built 80 en-suite bedroom care home, with specialist dementia care beds and facilities, set within beautifully landscaped gardens.
- The redevelopment of the Site offers a valuable opportunity to provide an exceptionally highquality care home in a sustainable location to address a shortfall in general care beds and an even more critical shortfall in dementia care beds and ensuite wetroom facilities within the district.
- The proposed care home building has been carefully designed so that it has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. Moreover, the building's more compact form and re-position further into the Site, along with the relocation of the car parking and additional landscaping, all contribute towards providing an improvement to the Green Belt's openness and purpose it serves in maintaining a gap between Girton and Cambridge urban areas. The Proposed Development therefore constitutes appropriate development within the Green Belt in accordance with Local Plan Policy S/4 and NH/9 and Paragraph 145 g) of the NPPF.
- The Proposed Development accords with all other relevant Development Plan policies in terms of heritage, highways, drainage, landscaping, biodiversity, pollution, sustainability and climate change.
- In summary, the Proposed Development offers the following economic, social and environmental benefits:
  - Securing a future use for the Site and making efficient use of previously developed land, rather than allowing the Site to become redundant;
  - Provision of a purpose-built care home in an attractive setting and a sustainable location to meet an increasing need for specialist C2, and importantly, dementia care accommodation in Cambridgeshire;
  - Provision of an exceptionally high quality internal and external environment for residential, nursing and dementia care and support for the families who can be comforted that their parents, grandparents or family members are receiving the highest standards of care;
  - Provision of a Dementia Excellence Learning Centre which will provide training and research into dementia care, helping to upskill the sub regional population and support the voluntary sector;
  - Provision of an energy efficient building, which reduces carbon emissions, along with integrating other design measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change through increase of green infrastructure, biodiversity and SUDS;
  - A net gain in biodiversity of 74.49% in habitat units and 38.72% in hedgerow units through new tree and hedgerow planting and creation of wildflower meadows and orchard areas, along with provision of bird and bat nesting boxes, log piles and biodiverse roof mats;
  - Contribution to the Council's five-year housing land supply, with a consequential effect of releasing existing housing stock into the market; and

•	Economic benefits arising from a variety of permanent and temporary jobs to manage, staff
	and operate the care home, along with creating new jobs within the construction and supply
	chain activity.

Overall, the Proposed Development accords with the Development Plan as a whole and therefore the application should be approved without delay.

# APPENDIX 1 SITE LOCATION PLAN



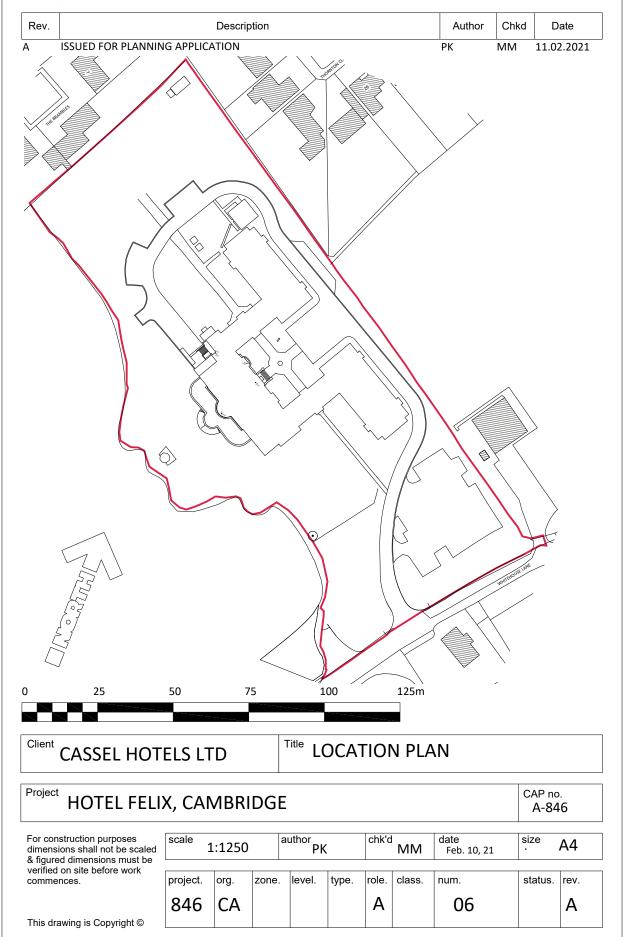


# CARLESS \* ADAMS

6 Progress Business Centre, Whittle Parkway, Slough, SL1 6DQ

tel: 01628 665131

www.carless-adams.co.uk



# APPENDIX 2 PROPOSED SITE PLAN



SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

SITE AREA — 1.39 Ha (3.43 acres)

CARE HOME

GROUND FLOOR 40 BEDS + SERVICE AREAS

FIRST FLOOR 40 BEDS + SPA ROOF SPACE SERVICE AREAS

TOTAL 80 BEDROOMS

# GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA

GROUND FLOOR
FIRST FLOOR
ROOF SPACE

7,100m<sup>2</sup>
2,275m<sup>2</sup>
2,100m<sup>2</sup>
280m<sup>2</sup>
4,655m<sup>2</sup>

SPACE PER RESIDENT 58.2m<sup>2</sup>

PARKING 31 BAYS INCL. 2 DISABLE BAYS

KEY

**EXISTING TREES** 

PROPOSED TREES

EXISTING TREES WITH TPO ORDER

A ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPLICATION PK MM 12.02.2021

Rev. Description Author Checked Date

C A R L E S S + A D A M S

6 Progress
Business Centre, Whittle Parkway, Slough, SL1 6DQ

www.carless-adams.co.uk tel: 01628 665131

Client

CASSEL HOTELS (CAMBRIDGE) LIMITED

Title SITE PLAN

C+A no.
A-846

scale 1:500 | author PK | chk'd MM | date Feb. 10, 21 | sheet size A

project. | org. | zone. | level. | type. | role. | class. | num. | status. | rev. |

Ref. | A | O4 | A

For construction purposes dimensions shall not be scaled & figured dimensions must be verified on site before work commences.

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