

**Former Hotel Felix, Cambridge**  
Cassel Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd  
Mrs Kate Hannelly Brown  
January 2023  
APP/W0530/W/22/3307903



**PROOF OF EVIDENCE**  
**KATE HANNELLY-BROWN**  
**BSC(HONS) MSC IHBC**

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## 1.0 Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 I am Kate Hannelly Brown BSc MSc IHBC, Partner in the Heritage Team at Bidwells. I hold a first-class Honours degree (Bachelor of Science) in Architectural Technology from the University of Northampton and a postgraduate degree (Master of Science) in Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University. I am a Full Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).
- 1.2 I have over twelve years' experience in the heritage, planning and design industry. I have previously worked for the public sector in Westminster and South Northamptonshire, as a Design and Conservation Officer, and in the private sector for over eight years at WYG and Bidwells. I have extensive experience of providing heritage and design advice on the historic environment for projects across the UK.
- 1.3 The Bidwells Heritage team is involved in a variety of projects, working for a range of clients from all sectors and on many types and scales of project. I regularly work on matters relating to non-designated heritage assets, and on issues of contextual design.
- 1.4 I have undertaken numerous Significance and Impact Assessments where I have analysed the relative merits of extant buildings and the effects that new development will have on the historic environment. This work includes dealing with direct physical impacts, effects on setting and view assessments.

### Statement of Truth

- 1.5 I understand my duties to provide objective and impartial evidence based on my own professional opinion. I confirm that the facts stated within this Statement are true and that the opinions expressed are my own. I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this Proof of Evidence are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those that are within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.



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Kate Hannelly Brown  
Partner, Heritage Bidwells LLP

Dated: 09 January 2023

## 2.0 Introduction

### Scope of Evidence

- 2.1 I am instructed by the appellant, Cassell Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd, in respect of the Hotel Felix, Cambridge [“the appeal site”].
- 2.2 My Proof of Evidence is submitted in response to the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council [“the LPA”, “the Council”] to refuse an application (ref:20/00953/FUL) for “*Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with external amenity space, access, parking, landscaping and other associated works*”. This decision was made by the South Cambridgeshire Planning Committee contrary to the recommendation of the Council’s officers.
- 2.3 My Proof of Evidence deals with the heritage issues raised in the consideration of the planning application and whether the Council’s related reason for refusing planning permission is justified in the context of national and local policies.
- 2.4 A detailed Heritage Statement (Bidwells; CD19) was prepared in February 2021 and submitted as part of the original application. The Heritage Statement, which focussed on above-ground built heritage only, contained a detailed appraisal of the Site, an assessment of the heritage significance of the development currently on the Site, and an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on such significance.
- 2.5 The remainder of my evidence is structured as follows:

**Section 3:** Sets out the background to my proof.

**Section 4:** Identifies the relevant policy and guidance that I apply in reaching my conclusions.

**Section 5:** Provides my assessment of the heritage significance of the building currently on the appeal site.

**Section 6:** Responds to comments by third parties.

**Section 7:** Finally, I provide my conclusions.

## 3.0 Background

### The Appeal Scheme (LPA ref: 21/00953/FUL)

3.1 The appeal scheme was refused on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. There were three reasons for refusal:

*1. The site is located outside of the development framework boundary of Girton, within the countryside and Cambridge Green Belt. The proposed development would represent inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt in policy terms as the development does not fall within any of the exception criteria within paragraphs 149 or 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy S/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and paragraphs 147, 148, 149 and 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 that seek to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt.*

*2. In addition to harm caused by inappropriateness, the proposed development would result in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. In taking a balanced judgement, the loss of the non-designated heritage asset is considered to cause substantial harm as it would fail to sustain or enhance the significance of the asset and the overall benefits of the scheme are not considered to outweigh the harm identified. The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and policy NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.*

*3. The application has failed to provide very special circumstances including the need for specialist housing which, taken individually or collectively, demonstrate why the harm by reason of inappropriateness in the Green Belt and other harm identified, being the loss of the non-designated heritage asset, is clearly outweighed by these considerations. The application therefore fails to satisfy the requirements of paragraphs 147 and 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.*

3.2 The decision taken by the Committee was contrary to the advice of officers as set out within an Officer Report [CD91].

3.3 This Proof of Evidence deals with the second reason for refusal.

## 4.0 Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance

### Legislation

- 4.1 There is no legislation that applies to the heritage considerations that arise in this case as the existing building on the site is neither listed nor in a conservation area. As the existing building on the site is a non-designated heritage asset, the impact of proposed development upon it is covered by policy and guidance, not law.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021.

#### Designated heritage assets

- 4.3 Paragraphs 199-202 contain policies for addressing potential impacts on designated heritage assets (such as listed buildings and conservation areas). These policies do not apply to this appeal.

#### Non-designated heritage assets

- 4.4 In the case of non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 203 requires a local planning authority to make a “*balanced judgement*” having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.5 This approach to the balancing of material issues emphasises the need for there to be a robust assessment of the relative significance of a non-designated asset, such that the resultant impact can be understood in the context of that significance.
- 4.6 Accordingly, the application included a Heritage Statement which assessed the significance of the existing non-designated asset and the impact of its demolition in the context of the proposed scheme. The extent to which the existing building is significant was clearly presented in that document to enable the balanced judgement to be made. There are no other statutory or policy ‘tests’ that relate to the impact of development on non-designated heritage assets: the planning balance is to be made with reference to paragraph 203.

### Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.7 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has a chapter entitled ‘Historic environment’, the latest version of which was published on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019. The PPG provides more detailed guidance on the policies in the NPPF.
- 4.8 In respect of heritage decision-making, the PPG stresses the importance of determining applications on the basis of significance and explains how the tests of harm and impact within the NPPF are to be interpreted. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the PPG is specific about the place of non-designated heritage assets in the planning process. Notably, the second paragraph (Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-

20190723), added in the 2019 revision, provides further clarity on the need for selectivity when identifying non-designated assets and that only a “minority” of buildings hold sufficient interest to warrant the identification.

## Local Policy

4.9 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was adopted in 2018 and sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide the future development of the district up to 2031. The relevant policy relating to Heritage Assets is Policy NH/14 which states:

*“1. Development proposals will be supported when:*

*a. They sustain and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the district’s historic environment including its villages and countryside and its building traditions and details;*

*b. They create new high quality environments with a strong sense of place by responding to local heritage character including in innovatory ways.*

*2. Development proposals will be supported when they sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their settings, **as appropriate to their significance and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework**, particularly:*

*c. Designated heritage assets, i.e. listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens;*

*d. Non-designated heritage assets including those identified in conservation area appraisals, through the development process and through further supplementary planning documents;*

*e. The wider historic landscape of South Cambridgeshire including landscape and settlement patterns;*

*f. Designed and other landscapes including historic parks and gardens, churchyards, village greens and public parks;*

*g. Historic places;*

*h. Archaeological remains of all periods from the earliest human habitation to modern times.”*

4.10 The accompanying text to this policy notes in para. 6.49 that *“For proposals affecting non-designated assets **a balanced judgement** will be made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”*

4.11 In relation to non-designated assets, the local policy as well as the accompanying text makes clear that proposals should be assessed in line with the requirements of the NPPF, i.e. a balanced judgement should be taken which takes into account the significance of the asset. There was sufficient information presented in the Heritage Statement to be able to make the balanced judgement required by this policy in line with para. 203 of the NPPF.

#### 4.12 **Guidance**

The following guidance is relevant to this appeal scheme:

- Historic England, 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance' (2008)
- Historic England, 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment', Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning (Note 2) (2015)
- Historic England 'Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage', Historic England Advice Note 7 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2021)
- Historic England, 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets', Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019)
- British Standard 7913, 'Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' (2013);

4.13 The concept of 'significance' in the context of cultural heritage was first expressed within the 1979 Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS, 1979). It defines "cultural significance" as the *"aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups"* (page 2, Article 1.2).

4.14 The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) also defines significance as *"the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting"*.

4.15 The Historic England document 'Conservation Principles' states that *"understanding a place and assessing its significance demands the application of a systematic and consistent process, which is appropriate and proportionate in scope and depth to the decision to be made, or the purpose of the assessment"* (para. 61). It identifies four main types of heritage value: evidential, aesthetic, historic and communal.

4.16 The Historic England publication, 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning: 2', sets out that the following steps should be undertaken when assessing significance:

*"12.1 Examine the asset and its setting (see GPA 3).*

*12.2 Check:*

- a. the Local Development Plan, evidence base and policies*
- b. main local, county and national records including the relevant Historic Environment Record (see paragraph 21),*
- c. statutory (these can be accessed via the National Heritage List for England) and local lists*
- d. the Heritage Gateway*
- e. the Historic England Archive, and*

*f. other relevant sources of information that would provide an understanding of the history of the place and the value the asset holds for society, for example historic maps, conservation area appraisals, townscapes studies or the urban archaeology database.”*

- 4.17 The Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition) identifies heritage interest as being archaeological, architectural and artistic as well as historic (para.11).
- 4.18 Historic England Advice Note 12 reiterates this and notes that “*interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic*” (para. 4).
- 4.19 The British Standards publication, BS 7913 (2013), notes: “*The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. There are many different ways in which heritage values can be assessed*” (section 4.2).
- 4.20 Significance can therefore be considered to be formed by a range of factors. Accordingly, there is a need for flexibility when significance is assessed.
- 4.21 All of the guidance set out above was considered when evaluating the heritage significance of the building in the present case.



## 5.0 Current building: assessment of significance

- 5.1 The existing building was granted a Certificate of Immunity (“Col”) by Historic England in 2020, preventing it from being listed for 5 years (Appendix 1). The Col confirms that the building does not hold special architectural or historic interest against the national criteria for listing. Although this assessment is at the national level, the Col report specifically referred to the bowed façade of the building as having typical features of the period (Appendix 1 para. 1.6) and the architectural quality of the interior having been negatively affected by its conversion to a hotel, with the removal of all historic fireplaces, the removal of walls and the creation of openings for use as a hotel (Appendix 1, para. 1.7).
- 5.2 It should be noted that there is one fireplace retained at ground floor, but this is a later installation and is why Historic England has noted that all fireplaces have been removed.
- 5.3 The Council has identified the building as a non-designated heritage asset through the planning process and indicated that the building holds a “modest” significance (Appendix 2, para. 2.9). They have acknowledged that it is a “fairly typical Victorian suburban villa” with a “modest level of design and presence”. (Appendix 2, para. 2.8)



Figure 1 – Diagram showing age of construction (orange dating to 1852, blue circa 2002 and pink 2008).

- 5.4 As South Cambridgeshire District Council does not have an official list of Buildings of Local Interest (“BLIs”), the Council’s conservation officer has made reference to the criteria for designating BLIs produced by the adjacent Cambridge City Council (Appendix 2 para. 2.9). However, this is a separate authority and the criteria in the list are tailored to that area and its heritage qualities.

- 5.5 Nonetheless, the Council's officers have indicated that the building does meet some of these criteria (quality design, use of materials and aesthetic appeal) although the conservation officer has not gone into detail on how, and to what extent, it meets these criteria. It is however, reiterated by the officer that the building is a "typical example of a villa" (Appendix 2, para. 2.9).
- 5.6 The building was constructed in 1852. It is two storeys in height, with accommodation in the attic, set over a basement and is constructed in a gault brick with stone dressings. The windows are arched and generally set in pairs with a large bow seen to the rear of the building. It also incorporates a Dutch gable, quoins and detailing to the chimneys. Significant features such as the former glasshouse have been removed and the original asymmetrical appearance of the front elevation has been concealed through an extension. This results in the principal elevation having a symmetrical appearance, contrary to its original design.



Figure 2 -1903 Ordnance Survey (OS) map showing the original glasshouse, which has subsequently been demolished, and the original asymmetrical front entrance of the building.

- 5.7 The former glasshouse was a large element of the ground floor and may have been constructed as a result of the owner's interest in botany. This has been replaced with a modern, more solid 'orangery'-type addition in 2008. The orientation of this element has been altered from that historically seen.





*Figure 3 - Orangerie addition seen from the rear*



*Figure 4 - Front elevation of the former Hotel Felix. The left-hand side is a modern extension which now creates a false sense of symmetry to this elevation. It obscures the original asymmetrical design of the building.*

- 5.8 There are limited features of interest internally, with the majority having been removed due to the building's former uses. Some areas of cornicing do remain, as does the stair. The building has been extended and altered significantly including the addition of large accommodation blocks and wings which serve to displace the entrance and confuse the hierarchy of the building.





Figure 5 - Example of the modern accommodation blocks



Figure 6 - View of the side of the orangery and one of the wings that have been added to the building. The right-hand side is a two-storey accommodation block, the appearance of which is shown in figure 5.

- 5.9 The application was accompanied by a Heritage Statement (CD.19) which contained a “proportionate” level of research into the existing building, as advised by para. 194 of the NPPF. The Heritage Statement then considered the impact of the proposal on the heritage significance of the building, taking account of that information.
- 5.10 In this case, due to the proposed demolition of the existing building, there would be a “total loss” of the significance that exists, in terms of the NPPF. However, this would be a “total loss” of a low level of significance. The building has been heavily altered through demolition, extension and alteration, both internally and externally, which results in its low level of heritage value.

- 5.11 It is this low level of heritage interest which should be weighed against other material considerations in the balanced judgement required by para. 203 of the NPPF.
- 5.12 There are numerous appeal decisions to which have concluded that the total loss of a low level of heritage significance can be justified by countervailing considerations, two of which can be found in Appendix 3 and 4 of the Heritage Statement submitted with the application. To confirm, these appeals related to the Priory School, Banstead (APP/L3625/W/19/3240562) and the Lord Nelson Public House, Cleeve (APP/D0121/W/19/3237905).
- 5.13 Considerable work has been done by the appellant's team to consider other alternatives to the proposed development, including retaining part of the existing building. These alternatives are discussed by Ms Magee in her proof of evidence. However, it must be made clear that, when dealing with a non-designated asset, there is no policy requirement to consider alternative schemes or to demonstrate that there are development options causing less harm, as for example as there would be with listed buildings or within a conservation area.
- 5.14 The material considerations which would be part of the balanced judgement to be made under para. 203 of the NPPF are identified by Mr Mike Derbyshire in his proof of evidence and include the provision of a high quality and sustainable building which would provide high quality care.
- 5.15 In the 'Heritage Assets' section of the officers' report on the application (CD.91), officers expressed the view *"that the loss of a Non-Designated Heritage Asset carries limited weight. This loss is balanced against a replacement building which is of a high architectural quality, highly sustainable and would provide a high quality care home, built to 21st century standards with a high level of amenity for future residents. The proposal will also result in other benefits such as meeting an identified care need, provision of a dementia research centre, biodiversity improvements and jobs growth. These benefits are considered to outweigh the harm"*.
- 5.16 It is not my function in this proof of evidence to undertake the balanced judgment of all material considerations required by para. 203 of the NPPF; that function is performed by Mr Derbyshire. I consider that my function is (i) to assess whether there is sufficient information presented in the Heritage Statement, in accordance with para. 194 of the NPPF, to be able to make the balanced judgment required by para. 203 of the NPPF; and (ii) in particular, to confirm whether I endorse the assessment of significance in that Heritage Statement. I can confirm that I do consider the Heritage Statement to contain sufficient information for the purposes of para. 203 of the NPPF, and that I endorse the assessment of the current building as having a low level of heritage significance.
- 5.17 I can also confirm that local and national policy allows for there to be a loss of a low level of heritage significance if justified by countervailing considerations; and the benefits of the appeal scheme are identified within the application.
- 5.18 In my judgment, the Council's Planning Committee failed to have due regard to the evidence submitted with the application in relation to the existing building's significance level, with the second reason for refusal suggesting that they erroneously considered the building to have a greater level of heritage significance than it has in reality.

- 5.19 As a result, I am not satisfied that the judgment required by para. 203 of the NPPF was appropriately “balanced”, as required by national and local policy, although I reiterate that I leave the balance itself to Mr Derbyshire.
- 5.20 I also note that both the Appellant and the Council’s planning case officer recognise that under Class B of Part 11 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, prior approval could be sought for the demolition of the building pursuant to a permitted development right and only the method of demolition would be assessed by the Council. This is also a relevant consideration when undertaking the balanced judgment required by para. 203 of the NPPF.



## 6.0 Third Party Comments

6.1 Below, I respond to the comments made by the relevant amenity societies, the parish council and Cllr Bygott on the heritage aspects of the application. The remaining comments received are covered in full within the evidence of Mr Derbyshire.

OBJECTOR	SUMMARY OF HERITAGE COMMENTS	RESPONSE
<p><b>Ancient Monument Society</b></p>	<p>Object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disappointment that heritage concerns have been dismissed with regards to the complete loss of a historic Victorian Building.</li> <li>• There is no clear justification why the house could not be adapted for staff accommodation, facilities, offices, etc.</li> <li>• The priority for development within the District should be to adapt and reuse historic buildings, rather than demolish high quality, viable buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objection not expressed by reference to heritage planning policy.</li> <li>• The justification for a new building is set out with Ms Magee’s evidence.</li> <li>• The new building would be constructed in compliance with development plan policies on climate change mitigation and sustainability, as set out in Mr Derbyshire’s evidence.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Victorian Society</b></p>	<p>Object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This building should be viewed as a non-designated heritage asset by the local authority. Consequently paragraph 197 should apply which requires “<i>a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset</i>”.</li> <li>• Adequate explanation has been not provided to justify this demolition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The building is, indeed, considered a non-designated asset by the Council and the Appellant’s heritage evidence has been prepared on this basis.</li> <li>• There was sufficient information presented in the Heritage Statement, in accordance with para. 194, to be able to make the balanced judgement required by para. 203 (formerly 197) of the NPPF.</li> <li>• The justification for demolition is set out with Ms Magee’s evidence. It is reiterated that prior approval could be sought for the demolition of the building pursuant to a permitted development right and only the method of demolition would be assessed by the Council.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Cambridge Past, Present and Future</b></p>	<p>Object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst the building does not qualify for formal listing it does qualify as a non-designated asset and should be registered as a Building of Local Interest.</li> <li>• There is a Cambridgeshire Historic Environment List and the Victorian villa on the former site Hotel Felix site is listed there as 05482.</li> <li>• The scheme is contrary to NH/14, NH/15 and HQ/1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council does not have a Building of Local Interest list but has identified the building as a non-designated asset.</li> <li>• It is believed that the reference to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment List is actually referring to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). This record relates directly to the Hotel Felix and not another earlier villa on the site. The existence of a CHER does not necessarily mean that a building has a higher level of significance. The record formed part of the evaluation process for assessing the significance as set out in the Heritage Statement. The record contained only limited information.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• The relevant reason for refusal only refers to policy NH/14. This policy requires a balanced judgement to be made in line with NPPF policies. As discussed above, there was sufficient information presented in the Heritage Statement, in accordance with para. 194, to be able to make the balanced judgement required by para. 203 of the NPPF.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Girton Parish</b></p>	<p>Object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effect on heritage was not the subject of a resolution but the Council notes that others have</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objection not expressed by reference to heritage planning policy.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> CHER 05482 reads as follows: “2. Howe House on site of HOW HOUSE (GT). Inscription recorded on historic map. 1. No information. 3. How House recorded on First Edition Ordnance Survey map from 1885, building still extant.”



	commented extensively on this aspect.	
<b>Cllr Bygott (email dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021)</b>	<p>Object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Hotel Felix is locally listed on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER)</li> <li>The applicant has not demonstrated that the demolition of the Victorian villa is necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objection not expressed by reference to heritage planning policy.</li> <li>The presence of a CHER record does not mean it is locally listed. South Cambridgeshire does not have a local list. However, the Council has identified it as a non-designated asset, providing it with the same national policy protection as a locally listed building.</li> </ul>
<b>Cllr Bygott (letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021)</b>	<p>Object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is locally listed on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). It therefore meets the definition of a heritage asset as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.</li> <li>The applicant has not demonstrated that the demolition of the Victorian villa is necessary. They have not considered the possibility of preserving the villa and building next to it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objection not expressed by reference to heritage planning policy although NPPF and local paragraphs are quoted.</li> <li>The presence of a CHER record does not directly mean that a building is a heritage asset. The record formed part of the evaluation process for assessing the significance as set out in the Heritage Statement. The record contained only limited information.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>The justification for demolition and other design options are set out with Ms Magee’s evidence. It is reiterated that prior approval could be sought for the demolition of the building pursuant to a permitted development right and only the method of demolition would be assessed by the Council.</li> </ul>

## 7.0 Conclusion and Summary of Proof

- 7.1 The Heritage Statement submitted with the application follows a clear methodology and has correctly identified the significance of the existing building as low.
- 7.2 The Heritage Statement is sufficient to enable the balanced judgment required by para. 203 of the NPPF to be carried out. In particular, the conclusions set out in the Heritage Statement provide sufficient evidence for the loss of the low-level heritage significance to be weighed against other countervailing considerations. This balancing exercise was set out in the application and will be presented by Mr Derbyshire on behalf of the Appellant.
- 7.3 In my judgment, the Council's Planning Committee failed to have due regard to the evidence submitted with the application in relation to the low level of heritage significance of the existing building. As a result, I am not satisfied that the judgment required by para. 203 of the NPPF was appropriately "balanced" as required by national and local policy. I defer to Mr Derbyshire's assessment of that balance in his proof of evidence.

# APPENDIX 1

## NOTIFICATION OF CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNITY (HISTORIC ENGLAND)

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## Case Name: Hotel Felix, Cambridge

## Case Number: 1471651

### Background

Historic England has received an application to assess Hotel Felix in Cambridge for a Certificate of Immunity (COI) from listing.

### Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1471820	Hotel Felix	Listing	Do not add to List

### Visits

Date	Visit Type
07 August 2020	Full inspection

### Context

- 1.1 The Close (now known as Hotel Felix) was sold in May 1967 to Cambridgeshire County Council, who applied for 'change of use to a country and teachers' centre and use of land as playing fields' (local planning ref: C/0485/67/O). The Council sold the building in 2001, and it was converted for use and extended as a hotel, with symmetrical wings of accommodation added to the north-east and north-west, and front elevation extended around 2002 (S/0817/00/F). A conservatory and function room were added to the east and west respectively around 2008 (S/0297/08/F). An application was submitted in 2017 for the proposed development and extension of the hotel to provide a new reception area and 16 additional bedrooms (S/4502/17/FL), however while permission was granted the extension was not carried out.
- 1.2 Hotel Felix is not located within a conservation area. The building has not previously been assessed for listing, or for a COI.

### Assessment

#### CONSULTATION

- 1.3 The applicant (as representative of the owner), the local authority, Historic Environment Record (HER) Officer, and Victorian Society were invited to comment on the factual details of the case as part of the consultation process. Representatives of the owner and the Victorian Society responded stating they had no corrections or further information to add to the report. No other responses were received.

#### DISCUSSION

- 1.4 The statutory criteria for listing are the special architectural or historic interest of a building, as set out in the Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (November 2018). To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its design, decoration or craftsmanship. Special interest may also apply to particularly significant examples of building types or techniques and significant plan forms. To be able to justify special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's history and / or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important individuals, groups or events; and the building itself in its current form will afford a strong connection with the values aspect of history. Before 1700,

all buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest; from 1700 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary; from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary.

- 1.5** In addition to the criteria outlined above, the Historic England Listing Selection Guide for Suburban and Country Houses' (December 2017) is relevant in this case. The Selection Guide outlines the historic development of suburban villas and detached houses, and construction of good-quality substantial homes for the professional classes on the edges of flourishing cities such as Cambridge. Most houses which pre-date 1850 that are unaltered and of interest will be listable. Due to the great number of suburban houses built in the second part of the C19, a greater degree of selection will apply when assessing these buildings for listing. Quality of elevational design, interest of planning, quality and survival of decorative elements, and innovation rather than imitation are all important factors for consideration. Intact and early examples of interesting technological improvements may add to a building's special interest. Many houses undergo change; the most important determinant is whether changes have been positive and contributory, or negative and harmful.
- 1.6** The Close, now known as Hotel Felix, was constructed in 1852, and is an attractive suburban villa, typical of those being built for the professional classes of flourishing cities in the mid-C19. The identity of its architect is not known. Its owner, a surgeon at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, was a keen botanist and silviculturist, and commissioned a glasshouse along the south-east side of the building, however this was removed when the house was adapted for use as an adult education centre around 1970. The most notable feature of this former house is its bowed façade, terrace and steps to the garden to the south-west. Its large plate glass windows and carved-stone classical surrounds, while attractive, are typical of this period, when technological advances made larger panes a possibility.
- 1.7** This private residence was converted and vastly extended for use as a hotel around 2002, with large wings of accommodation added to the north-east and north-west. The front (north-east) elevation was heavily altered at this time, with bays of windows added to the south-east side to match those on the north-west side. The hotel was further extended around 2008 when a conservatory and function room were added to the east and west sides respectively. In addition to these vast extensions, the interior of the building has been much altered. While the main stair, attractive internal window surrounds and some cornicing survive, the architectural quality of the interior of this former residence has been negatively affected by its conversion to an adult education centre and later a hotel. All fireplaces have been lost, and the legibility of the original plan form has been affected by the removal of walls and creation of openings for use as a hotel.
- 1.8** In comparison with listed suburban houses from this period, Hotel Felix is not associated with a known architect, has been vastly extended and altered, and does not retain a high proportion of its original internal features. Although an attractive building, it does not possess special architectural or historic interest and does not meet the strict criteria for listing in a national context. Historic England recommends that Hotel Felix be issued a COI.

## CONCLUSION

- 1.9** After examining the available records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are not fulfilled. Hotel Felix does not meet the criteria for listing in a national context, and a COI should therefore be issued.

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

- 1.10** Hotel Felix, a former house, now a hotel, built in 1852, and extended around 1970, 2002 and 2008, is not recommended for listing, and a COI should be issued for the following principal reasons:

### 1.11 Degree of architectural interest:

- \* its design is not associated with a known architect;
- \* the former residence was vastly extended around 1970, 2002 and 2008, when it was adapted for use as an adult education centre, and later as a hotel;
- \* the architectural quality of the interior has been negatively affected by its conversion to a hotel, with the removal of all fireplaces, removal of walls and creation of openings for use as a hotel.

### Countersigning comments:

- 1.12** Agreed. Hotel Felix, although displaying some architectural interest through its detailing and composition, is too altered to meet the criteria for listing. A Certificate of Immunity should therefore be issued.  
Caroline Skinner  
8 September 2020.

# Annex 1

## Factual Details

**Name:** Hotel Felix

**Location:** Huntingdon Road, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0LX

County	District	District Type	Parish
Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire	District Authority	Girton

### History

**1.13** Hotel Felix, formerly known as 'The Close' or 'Howe Close' was constructed as a private dwelling in 1852 for Charles Lestourgeon, a surgeon at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, who bought the site in 1849. A keen botanist and silviculturist, he had a glasshouse constructed adjoining the south-east side of the house. The 1871 Census records Charles Lestourgeon and his wife as occupants, along with their daughter Lucy Ellen, a cook, housemaid, needlewoman, groom and footman. In 1901, the residence was occupied by the politician Sir John Gorst, MP for Cambridge University, and his wife Mary Elizabeth, daughters Hylda Marian and Edith Violet, grandson Archibald Valentine, and six servants.

**1.14** The 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps published in 1888, 1903, and 1926, show 'The Close' as having a flight of steps to the centre of its front (north-east) elevation, a glasshouse to its south-east side, and a bowed rear (south-west) elevation, terrace and steps to the garden. The 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map published in 1968 shows 'Howes Close' with much the same plan form. The house was sold in May 1967 to Cambridgeshire County Council, who extended the house for use as an adult education centre (or 'County Centre' as it was known). The 1977 OS map shows a large extension was constructed to the west of the house and the Victorian glasshouse removed around 1970. The Council sold the building in 2001, and it was adapted for use as a hotel, with symmetrical wings of accommodation added to the north-east and north-west around 2002. It appears the infill extension to the east side of the front entrance (imitating the bays to the west of the door) was also constructed at this time. A single-storey conservatory was added to the east side of the former house around 2008 (partially on the site of the former glasshouse), and a function room was added to the west side.

### Details

**1.15** Former house, now a hotel, built in 1852, and extended around 1970, 2002 and 2008.

**1.16** MATERIALS: the roofs have slate coverings, and walls are constructed of gault brick with stone dressings.

**1.17** PLAN: the former house is roughly rectangular in plan, with steps to the centre of the front (north-east), and a bowed central bay, terrace and steps to the garden (south-west); symmetrical side wings projecting north-east and north-west were added around 2002; and a rectangular-plan conservatory and function room were added to the east and west around 2008.

**1.18** EXTERIOR: two-and-half storeys in height over a raised basement. The front (north-east) range has a long roof gabled to the south-east and north-west, and the rear range has three perpendicular roofs gabled to the north-east and south-west, all with slate coverings. The walls and chimneys are constructed of gault brick with stone dressings. All windows throughout the building are segmental-arched and contain timber-framed sash windows, unless otherwise stated. The front (north-east) elevation is seven bays in width, with three window bays either side of a central projecting entrance bay and flight of stone steps. The entrance bay has a Dutch gable with a decorative stone finial, a pair of sash windows to the first floor, and a curved lead-covered canopy over the ground floor entrance supported by carved wooden consoles. Under the canopy, a segmental-arched door opening contains double-leaf timber-framed overlights and half-glazed doors, flanked to each side by a narrow segmental-arched window, and boot scrape in a segmental-arched stone surround. North-west of the entrance bay, the first floor has three windows; the ground floor has a single window, and a box bay window with a hipped leaded roof, containing a pair of windows separated by a carved-stone engaged-column mullion; the raised basement has two windows under the box window. The section south-east of the entrance bay was constructed around 2002 to imitate the section north-west of the entrance; the glazing bars are slightly thicker than the original. The rear elevation to the garden is arranged in three gabled sections. The central section has a Dutch gable to the attic with a carved stone finial, and a

two-storey bowed bay with a balustraded parapet, and three pairs of windows to the first and ground floors, those on the ground floor descending all the way to the ground. The gabled sections either side of the bowed bay each feature a single pair of windows on the first and ground floors, those on the ground floor descending all the way to the ground. All pairs of windows on the garden elevation feature a carved-stone engaged-column mullion and stone sills. Retractable canopies were added over the ground floor windows of the side sections in the early C21. From the terrace (the ground covering of which was replaced by timber decking in the early C21), a flight of seven bowed stone steps descend to the garden to the south-west. The south-east and north-west side elevations each have a substantial chimney stack, constructed of gault brick with stone dressings. The south-east side has a large round-arched and margined stair window, while the north-west side appears to have had a smaller window opening (presumably illuminating a former service stair) which was blocked when the building was extended around 2002. The single-storey kitchen adjoining the north-west side appears to have been reconstructed around 2002. Two accommodation wings were added around 2002, projecting north-east and north-west from the side elevations of the former house, each having a single-storey link leading to a two-storey block to the north. A single-storey conservatory and function room were added to the south-east and north-west sides respectively around 2008.

**1.19** INTERIOR: the entrance hall retains a moulded classical cornice, and segmental arch with plain engaged pilasters on the south-west wall to the stair hall (infilled with a square-headed door opening around 2002). The entrance hall was modernised as a hotel reception around 2002, with a reception desk and access to the west accommodation wing on the west side, and a square-headed opening to a lift lobby on the east side (added around 2002). The stair hall retains segmental arches on plain pilasters to the north, east and west, and original staircase to the first floor on the east side. The staircase comprises turned barley-twist balusters, two to each bracketed open tread, supporting a moulded wooden handrail which terminates in a volute over a turned barley-twist newel post. From the stair hall, corridors lead south-east to the east accommodation wing (added around 2002) and north-west to the function room (added around 2008). South-west of the stair hall, the bow-ended drawing room features a decorative classical cornice, a classical window surround with fluted engaged-column mullions, and an ornamental marble and gilded fireplace (which appears to have been introduced around 2002). Two square-headed openings in blocked round-headed arches provide access to the dining room to the west, which features a plain cornice, and provides access to a small kitchen to the west. A square-headed opening on the east wall of the drawing room provides access to the bar, which features an ornamental cornice, and provides access to the conservatory to the south-east (added around 2008). The stair to the first floor is lit by a large round-arched window over the half-landing, in a classical wooden surround with carved consoles. Over the stair, the ceiling features a classical cornice and bands of plasterwork including a prominent band of Celtic fretwork. The first floor has three rooms to the south-west overlooking the garden, each having a plain cornice and classical window surround with an engaged-column mullion to each pair of windows. The dividing wall between the east room (now known as the Calypso Room) and central room (now known as the Atlas Room) has been removed and a partition introduced. The west room (now known as the Phoebe Room) was subdivided around 2002 to provide a kitchen to the rear. On the north side of the landing, there are two bedrooms in the original part of the building, and an additional bedroom, toilets and lift in the extension in the north-east corner (added around 2002). From the first floor landing, a service stair provides access to two small rooms in the attic (not accessible at time of visit in August 2020). The basement is accessed via a modern stair under the main stair, with a plain wooden handrail, stick balusters and newel posts, and contains the services for the building, a large kitchen, freezers, pantry, wine cellar and staff dining room. No original fireplaces survive throughout the building.

### **Selected Sources**

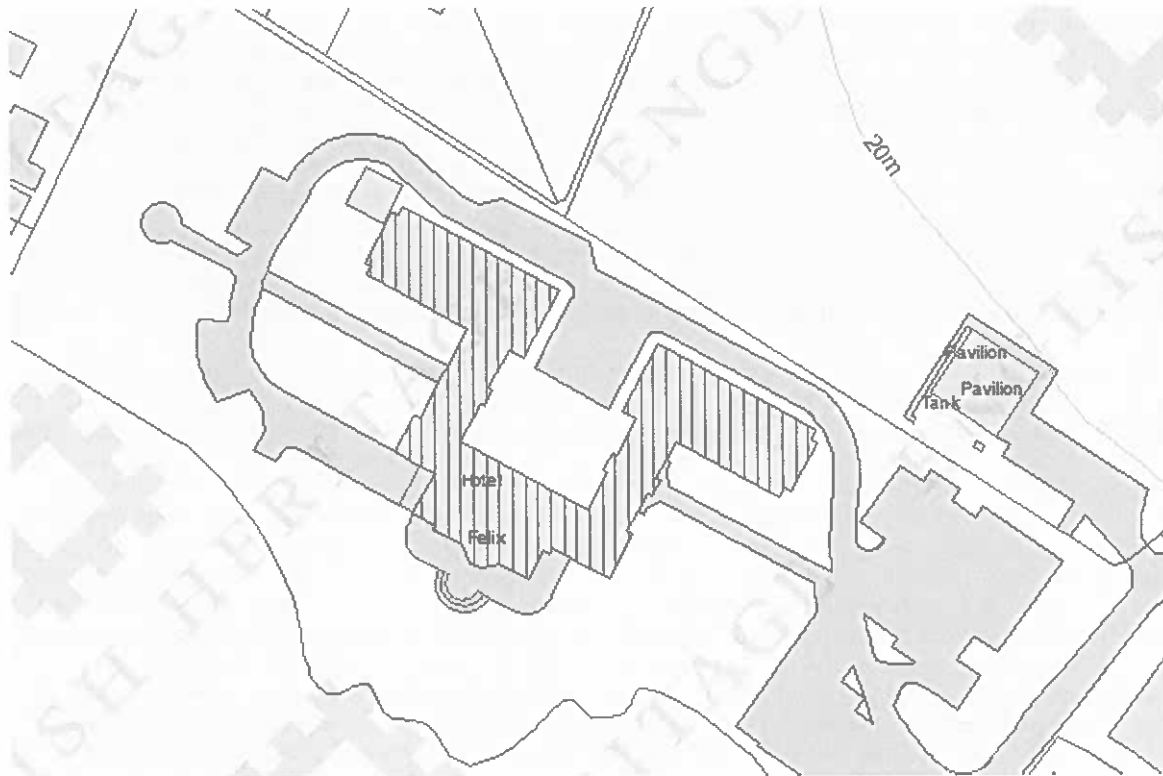
#### **Books and journals**

The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume IX, (1989), 129-131

#### **Other**

Bidwells, 'Cassel Hotels (Cambridge) Ltd, Certificate of Immunity: Hotel Felix, Cambridge', (July 2020)



**Map****National Grid Reference: TL4314860563**

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1471820\_1.pdf

## APPENDIX 2

# PRE-APPLICATION AND APPLICATION RESPONSES – CONSERVATION TEAM

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**GREATER CAMBRIDGE**  
SHARED PLANNING

## BNE Conservation Team

### Consultation Response Form

<b>Reference Number:</b>	20/51137/PREAPP
<b>Proposal:</b>	Construction of an 80-bed care home, etc., following demolition of existing buildings.
<b>Site Address:</b>	Hotel Felix, Whitehouse Lane, CAMBRIDGE, CB3 0LF.
<b>Conservation Officer:</b>	J.Hurst
<b>Case Planning Officer:</b>	Katie Christodoulides
<b>Date:</b>	30 July 2020

#### Comments:

*Please note that these comments are not based on a detailed examination of the building but I have bicycled through the site which appears to be out of use.*

#### Existing

2.1 The 'significance assessment' submitted contains a history of the site and building and gives an estimate of how & when the building changed over time leading to its current incarnation as an hotel.

The building is not an LB and does not lie within a CA [SCDC does not have BLIs but the nearest example of that is the NIAB HQ across the boundary in the city not far away]. However, it does have a certain quality of design and presence but has had a catalogue of change & alteration over time.

#### Proposed

2.2 The assessment is divided into three sections :

*Demolition* – Whilst the building has not been designated formally in any way, current thinking suggests that for sustainability/environmental, as well as other reasons retaining, adapting and reusing existing buildings is preferable to wholesale demolition and replacement unless there is no alternative. The historic element of the hotel does not appear to be beyond repair and reuse, so the judgement is whether there is sufficient justification for demolition and replacement. Reports like the "Living with beauty" example stress this aspect and the 'Architects' Journal' now runs a prize called "Retrofit Awards" for encouraging conversion & reuse.

2.3 *New build* – The design submitted is divided into two blocks, presumably for functional reasons. The main care home block is laid out as a hollow square with formal planting in the centre. The

scheme is a fairly plain historicistic two storey design with hipped roofs. Its repetitive nature will require good detailing, materials and workmanship to make it work and the long elevations could have a rather 'barrack block' feel when viewed from within the site. There are no drawings to indicate what will be visible through/over the greenery from either the houses in Girton [across the boundary] or – in the case of the extra care block – from Whitehouse Lane. Whilst there is no objection to this architectural approach, it does feel – given the size of the main block – like it could do with a bit more vivacity.

2.4 *Site layout* – If the demolition of the existing is accepted, then there seems to be no valid reason for putting the replacement building right in the middle of the site. This site forms part of an important 'green finger' separating Girton from the city and it is by historic chance that the existing building now rather links the two and dilutes that separation.

2.5 As the city expands onto the NIAB site, Whitehouse Lane tends to have become the delineator with the fringe of city suburbs to the South and the C20 suburban expansion of Girton to the North. If the historic building is to go, then it seems preferable that any new development is firmly located in one part of the site or the other, not 'floating' in between and diluting the effect of the 'green separation'. There appears to be no architectural or practical reason why the care home block should not be – for example – pushed well towards the back of the site and be seen as clearly part of Girton and its built fabric. Likewise, the extra care block could be pushed forwards towards Whitehouse Lane so that it fronted the lane more formally and be seen as part of the Northern edge of the city. Thus the 'green finger' [the gardens of the overall complex] would be re-established more clearly and that sense of separation would be stronger.

31 July 2020

#### FURTHER THOUGHTS

2.6 Green belt – This is not something with which I usually deal but I have now looked at the Planning Statement which Bidwells resent.

They quote two aspects which seem relevant to me: NPPF – does “not have greater impact on the openness of the Green belt than the existing development”. Whilst I don't have an architectural problem with the proposed main block, it would have arguably more visual impact due to its long, repetitive elevations than the existing but this could be mitigated by moving it nearer to the Girton part of the site. Once you have demolished the existing, there must be – by definition – no visual impact at all, so by placing the replacement building on the same spot introduces impact that should be mitigated because this chance has arisen. They also quote policy – ‘one of the key purposes of the Green Belt’ which is to “prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city”. Here, in the so-called Girton Gap, the historic location of the existing house does visually ‘block’ that gap. Surely it cannot be right, having ‘unblocked’ [and fulfilled the ‘key purpose’] by demolition to then reduce the openness by reblocking it, when mitigation is possible ?

2.7 Significance Assessment – I am not happy with demolition but I think that their assessment has some strength because there are no formal designations here. Going down the 'non-designated heritage asset' route can be tricky which is why – above – I concentrate on the sustainability of retaining and converting which is a strong argument. And has policy support. Perhaps you need to get a better idea of why the retain & convert option was rejected and why the knock-it-down & rebuild option is preferred [other than the usual 'constructional convenience' one]. It ought to be possible devise a scheme to retain the historic house, remove the 'modern' extensions and extend to the North only and assess whether this is an option.



GREATER CAMBRIDGE  
SHARED PLANNING

## BNE Conservation Team

### Consultation Response Form

<b>Reference Number:</b>	21/00953/FUL
<b>Proposal:</b>	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with external amenity space, access, parking, landscaping and other associated works.
<b>Site Address:</b>	Former 'Hotel Felix', Whitehouse Lane, CB3 0LX.
<b>Conservation Officer:</b>	J.Hurst
<b>Case Planning Officer:</b>	Mary Collins
<b>Date:</b>	2 July 2021

#### Comments:

See also comments on 20/51137/PREAPP of 30 July 2020.

#### Existing

2.8 The 'significance assessment' submitted contains a history of the site and building and gives an estimate of how & when the building changed over time, leading to its current incarnation as an hotel.

The building is not an LB [and has immunity from Listing; see certificate from Historic England submitted] and does not lie within a CA [SCDC does not have BLIs] but does have a certain modest level of design and presence but has had a catalogue of change and alteration over the years. A very extensive range of indifferent extensions to form the hotel were built in the C21. As a fairly typical Victorian suburban villa it should be categorised as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) with its setting compromised by modern works.

2.9 It is for the LPA to determine whether a building is an NDHA and this can be during the consideration of a development proposal as stated in Historic England's Advice Note 7 (second edition) in paragraph 27. The significance of the building can be assessed against the published criteria for designating BLIs from the adjacent LPA, Cambridge City Council [and, hence, relevant as part of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP)]. This indicates that some of the criteria are met [for example, quality design, use of materials and aesthetic appeal] and is a typical example of a villa of the well-to-do professionals building houses in this period. It also has some historic interest in that it had locally notable owners/occupants and was in institutional use by the County Council for some time and will be remembered by users. This modest significance indicates that it can be categorised as an NDHA.

2.10 The location of the historic part of the building lies in an important 'green finger' [the so-called



Girton Gap] that clearly separates the edge of the city from the suburban part of Girton and, by historic chance, visually blocks that gap. In townscape terms, maintaining this gap is important and in terms of the evolution of both settlements it should be important that they are not seen as merging or the one subsuming the other.

#### Proposed

- 2.11 *Demolition* – The agents have noted that there were structural reports undertaken in the past but the comments suggest that the problems were not beyond repair. They also suggest that there were problems associated with damp and lack of compliance with the DDA. None of these sound to be insuperable or impossible to remedy.  
Current thinking is that the most sustainable building is an existing building and there needs to be a judgment as to whether the NDHA could be repaired, retained and converted to a new use or, with selective demolition of insignificant elements, it could be repaired, retained and extended to better fulfil the needs of its new use. The submission describes various ‘concept designs’ looking at retaining the ‘existing building’ and converting it to the proposed use; four of the concepts involve retaining the modern extensions and one demolishing the modern extensions and retaining and extending the NDHA. The four versions have no real conservation merit in that the historic element would not be given an improved setting. The fifth version has conservation merit as an idea and it should be possible to produce a design that provided the accommodation required as well as improving the setting of the historic element. The rejection of this concept as worthy of taking forward seems to be based entirely on perceived problems with levels. It is not shown why this appears to be such a problem and it seems improbable that this is an insurmountable design difficulty.
- 2.12 *New build* – The design submitted is for a ‘hollow square’ plan form consisting of four substantial blocks of brick construction with pitched, hipped, slated roofs with flat areas with glazed link blocks. Some blocks are of two storeys and some of two-and-a-half storeys. It is a ‘historicist’ design with some glazed link blocks that are intended to break up the visual bulk of the scheme. Whilst repetitiveness can work well in some neo-classical designs [the terraces of Edinburgh or Bath, for example] these are usually in an urban setting whereas here that repetitiveness would be seen in an edge of suburban setting. Without any photomontages or CGIs to show a three-dimensional, more realistic view, an impression of rather barrack-like blocks is given. Whilst there is no objection to this architectural approach, it does feel – given the size of the proposal – like it could do with more vivacity.
- 2.13 *Site layout* – If the demolition of the existing is accepted, then there seems to be no valid reason for putting the replacement building right in the middle of the site. This site forms part of an important ‘green finger’ separating Girton from the city and it is by historic chance that the existing building now rather links the two and dilutes that separation.
- 2.14 As the city expands onto the NIAB site, Whitehouse Lane tends to have become the delineator with the fringe of city suburbs to the South and the C20 suburban expansion of Girton to the North. If the historic building is to go, then it seems preferable that any new development is firmly located in one part of the site or the other, not ‘floating’ in between and diluting the effect of the ‘green separation’. There appears to be no architectural or practical reason why the care home block should not be – for example – pushed well towards the back of the site and be seen as clearly part of Girton and its built fabric. Or the block could be pushed forwards towards Whitehouse Lane so that it fronted the lane more formally and be seen as part of the Northern edge of the city. Thus the ‘green finger’ [the gardens of the overall complex] would be re-established more clearly and that sense of separation would be stronger.
- 2.15 The proposals will not comply with Local Plan policy NH/14. This is because the scheme fails sustain and enhance the significance of the NDHA, including its setting, appropriately to its

significance. NH/14, Section 2, part d.

2.16 With reference to the NPPF and the effect on the significance of the heritage asset, paragraph 197 would apply. This is because the scheme would cause substantial harm in the case of complete demolition and loss of the NDHA.

**Conditions:**

2.17 Should this gain consent, then the usual Conditions relating to external materials and detailing would be necessary in order to get a decent building.



BIDWELLS