

1.4 Aerial Images of Site in Context



Aerial view of site, highlighted in orange
(source: google maps)

1.5 Visual Assessment of Site



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.1 The Surroundings

- + The site is located just outside the settlement boundary of Girton, Cambridge. It is approximately 1.8 miles west of Cambridge town centre.
- + The site is surrounded by two housing estates from west and east, with a diverse range of single, two and three-storey dwellings, by Howes Close Sports Ground to the north and by open landscape from south.
- + The whole of the site is bounded by trees.

2.2 Accessibility

- + The site is located within a 5-minute walk from Thorton Road bus stop, providing service to Oakington, Bar Hill and Cambridge.
- + The existing site access is on the southern boundary, off the site from Whitehouse Lane.
- + Nearby junction provide access to M11, A14 and A428.

2.3 Topography & Landscape

- + The existing building is located within sizeable grounds, with privacy maintained by the trees lining the boundary around the majority of the perimeter.
- + The site is fairly flat without significant changes in levels.
- + The site lies in the Cambridge Green Belt

2.4 Site Opportunities and Constraints



Key

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | Existing site access |  | Breaks in tall vegetation allowing glimpse views |
|  | Existing parking |  | Existing gardens with established tall vegetation |
|  | Tall mature vegetation at the boundary | | |

2.5 The Existing Building Analysis

Hotel Felix is a two-storey Victorian villa, set over a basement, with accommodation in the attic. It was originally constructed in 1852 in gault brick with stone dressings. As such, it falls within a period of time where a considerable number of comparable buildings survive.

The hotel was acquired in December 2018, and despite much focus it proved impossible to deliver a sustainable and meaningful level of viability.

The building has been heavily altered through demolition, extension and alteration both internally and externally, including buildings and structures within its grounds. Original elements of the building, such as the glass house, have been demolished and have been replaced with modest quality additions.

As a result of its heavy adaptation the building has low heritage value and has a Certificate of Immunity from Listing issued by Historic England."

The key reasons against the use of the existing building as part of a refurbishment scheme:

- + The shape & size of the existing building does not allow for a sufficient amount of bedrooms that would meet the expectations of a modern care home;
- + There would be a significant amount of work required to make the existing building suitable for those with disabilities (who would make up the majority of the building users along with the other applicable building regulations;
- + That the number of rooms resultant of the adaptation of the building would not be sufficient to justify the extensive alteration works, or in the long run to sustain the ongoing maintenance of the building.

The list to the right is not exhaustive but provides some of the many differences between the existing building and a new build to show the challenges the current building will face when being considered to be utilised for a Care Home.

Much of the existing structure would dictate that changes to room spaces would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, the building is not wide enough to provide for two bedrooms and a corridor across its width. The existing structural walls provide for very limited flexibility. The number of usable rooms would be seriously reduced in any refurbishment programme, and the final outcome would give an uneconomic, unsustainable, expensive to run care home, with a disjointed, fragmented, and unmanageable layout.

Please refer to the Existing Building Analysis Report supplied with the application for more detail.

	Existing Building	New Build	Comments
Suitable for providing high dependency care needs	Mostly No (depending on which bedroom)	Yes	Within the new home all rooms will have adequate space for wheelchairs/hospital beds & other required medical equipment.
En suites	Yes	Wet room as standard	In the new care home, all residents will have access to their own en-suite in their bedroom.
Dementia friendly	No	Yes	Most care clients today have some form of dementia related confusion and modern homes are designed to accommodate this in a safe dementia friendly environment along with a proposed secure access to a dementia friendly garden. Internal/ external wander routes without dead ends ensure a reduction in frustration and anger.
Suitable for physically disabled?	Poor	Yes	Spatial provision plus ability to fit ceiling hoists, fully DDA / Equality Act compliant. Ensure all circulation throughout the building is level on each floor without ramps or steps.
Attractive to private paying clients	Minimal	Yes	Restricted local authority (LA) budgets make private clients an ever-larger share of the market and will provide more long-term financial stability and help subsidise LA lower rates.
Staff facilities	Poor	Excellent	The new care home will have male/female showers/changing rooms as well as large nice rest room facilities.
Sustainability/Energy Efficient	No	Yes	Current building does not comply with current energy saving or thermal insulation requirements. New building will meet all regulations.
Mechanical ventilation	No	Yes	Retrofitting these systems is very expensive, and can lead to reduced head heights in areas, however it will be included in the design of the new care home.
Air Conditioning	No	Yes	As above with mechanical ventilation.
Sprinkler system	No	Yes	Retrofitting these systems is very expensive, however it will be included in the design of the new care home.
Stretcher lifts	No	Yes	The existing building currently has one functioning 8 person lifts (or 1 wheelchair and 3 persons). The new care home will include two 13 person lifts that can accommodate an ambulance size stretcher or 2 wheelchairs.
Communal spaces	Poor	Excellent	The industry standard for modern care homes is 4.8sqm however new homes are proposing 5sqm+ as we believe this make for a better quality of life for the service user.

2.6 Concept Designs utilising Existing Building

Option 01 - Covered courtyard



This concept looked to cover the existing courtyard and convert it in to an internal communal space for the residents within the home. The linking of the outside existing levels with the internal levels of both the original buildings and the extensions did not manage to eradicate the need for a substantial internal ramp and steps between the spaces. The detailing of the roof connections between all existing structures also become unviable from a cost perspective.

Option 04- Knock down existing extensions and rebuild



This concept looks to remove the existing extensions and rebuild them in similar locations albeit it on a wider footprint to remove any internal ramps. This option still does not allow any level access from bedrooms out in to the garden spaces nor does in provide enough communal space to support the running of the home.

Option 02 - Covered courtyard and further extension



This concept takes option 01 and looks to extend the accommodation by a further 16rooms however the travel distance from the extended leg are deemed to be 'distance prohibitive' when looking at encouraging and enabling a resident to utilise the communal spaces. The existing levels on site mean that none of the resident bedrooms would have direct external access and the only access to the communal garden would be via the central communal area.

Option 05 - Standalone proposal retaining existing building



This concept looks to create a standalone care home to the north of the site and retain the existing hotel building as configured. As per option 03 the additional impact on the green belt was deemed to be too great along with the existing building having very little use.

Option 03 - extension to the North West



This concept looks to undertake substantial internal reconfiguration within the original part of the building to create the social spaces for the home. A new build extension is then proposed to achieve 80 en-suite rooms around a courtyard configuration. The proposal utilises the majority of the land to the North west of the site and created a greater impact on the openness of the green belt. The scheme also triggered the need to remove one of the TPO's trees.

The existing southern leg also became isolated from the rest of the home creating a separation within the home which was inefficient for staffing and integration.

In Summary all of the 5 schemes that were explored over a 9month period presented the same challenges;

- + Greater impact on the green belt
- + The quality of the end product would always be compromised by internal level changes
- + Substantial internal reconfiguration
- + No level access to private garden spaces from resident rooms
- + The costs of all 5 concepts was prohibitive
- + Restricted access to limited communal garden areas

2.7 Façade Retention Analysis

Following up from the process that looked to retain the whole existing building, we have explored the options of retaining the bow elevation as the most attractive part of the building.

- + The first option looked at retaining the bow façade and element of side returns, to retain some context;
- + The second option only retained the bow façade.

Retention of the building façade was analysed and has been found both imprudent and infeasible as noted below:

- + Structural issues associated with façade retention (i.e. the problems with the basement, change in levels, the stitching of the new and the old, and the known structural issues with the building and its foundations impacting on the stabilisation);
- + Level change between the existing building and the new development attached to it as levels dictated by the façade. The existing FFL is elevated by approx. 1.3m above the surrounding land, and as the internal ramps are discouraged within the building, the ground floor level across the whole building would need to be maintained at this level;
- + As a result of the point above, none of the bedrooms would have direct access to the gardens as steps are not allowed, and private residents patios or balconies are discouraged, for security;
- + Stepped access to garden would not be allowed therefore excessive ramps would be introduced from the communal spaces as minimum, compromising significantly the outdoor amenities;
- + The aesthetic character of the resulting structure would be compromised- windows within the existing and new parts would follow different patterns;
- + the height and scale characteristics of the existing façade and contemporary care home make the successful integration into the proposed development infeasible.

Additionally:

- + The heritage value of the building not warranting this approach;
- + The limited amount of fabric which would be retained;

3.0 Planning and Consultation

3.1 Planning Policy

The majority of the site lies within South Cambridgeshire District. The adopted Development Plan comprises the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. The Planning Statement accompanying the application provides a full assessment of the proposed development against the relevant planning policies. A brief overview of the Local Plan policies and other design guidance, which has influenced the overall design of the proposed development is provided below.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

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. The policy sets a number of criteria to achieve this, which includes:

- + Preserve or enhance the character of the local area and respond to context in wider landscape.
- + Conserve or enhance important natural and historic assets.
- + Include variety and interest within a coherent, place-responsive design.
- + Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area.
- + Deliver a strong visual relationship between buildings that comfortably define and enclose spaces
- + Achieve a permeable development with ease of movement and access for all users and abilities.

- + Provide safe and convenient access for all users and abilities to public buildings and spaces.
- + Ensure that car parking is integrated into the development in a convenient, accessible manner and does not dominate the development and its surroundings or cause safety issues.
- + Mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- + Include high quality landscaping that integrate the development with its surroundings.
- + Protect the health and amenity of occupiers and surrounding uses.
- + Design-out crime and provide a safe environment.

Policy NH/8: 'Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt' requires any development proposals within the Green Belt to be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.

Policy NH/9: 'Redevelopment of Previously Development Sites and Infilling in in the Green Belt' states that redevelopment of previously developed sites in the Green Belt will be supported as long as they would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development

Policy H/9: 'Housing Mix' requires specialist accommodation to demonstrate appropriate design standards.

Policy T1/3: 'Parking Standards' sets out car and cycle parking standards for C2 use.

Policy CC/1: 'Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change' require proposals to embed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation into the development.

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance

South Cambridgeshire's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Documents (2020) contains guidance on energy, water, climate change, biodiversity, light pollution, contamination, noise, air quality, odour, flood risk, heritage, construction waste.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's national policies for achieving well-designed places and promoting healthy and safe communities. The Framework is supported by online planning practice guidance and the recently published National Design Guide.

Paragraph 145 of the Framework permits redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt as long as it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

Industry Design Guidance

- + Care Quality Commission
- + HAPPI Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation

3.2 Planning Applications

- + S/4502/17/FL: 23rd February 2018- permission granted for redevelopment and extension to provide new reception area and 16no. additional bedrooms
- + S/0346/10/F: 14th June 2010- variation of condition 11 to allow for erection of conservatory prior to demolition of the two-storey dwelling
- + S/0297/08/F: 23rd May 2008- permission granted for new extensions to the rear

3.3 Pre-Planning Advice

- + Initial high-level meeting with Sharon Brown, Assistant Director – Delivery was held on 27th May 2020.
- + Pre-app 1: Meeting held with planning case officer, urban design officer and landscape officer on 4th August 2020, to discuss the scheme at concept stage, with written advice provided in letter dated 9th September 2020.
- + In response to the initial design comments raised by officers, the building was moved further away from the northern boundary to create more space and further enhance the outlook from the bedrooms. Also, it was sited further to the west to increase the setback of the building from the entrance to the site. Glazed links were added to break up and add relief to the building line. The proposed car parking area was relocated to minimise the visual impact from Whitehouse Lane and new soft landscaping was added to provide visual breaks. Finally additional new tree planting was added to the boundaries of the site.
- + Pre-app 2: Meeting held with planning case officer, urban design officer and landscape officer on 19th October 2020, to incorporate comments received and as the proposal developed, with written advice provided in letter dated 16th November 2020.

The application has been progressed in collaboration with the Case Officer and Urban Design officer to ensure that the proposed use and development was acceptable for the site along with developing a design that is appropriate for the context and the user group.

3.4 Public Consultation

A series of public consultations have been held to enable all interested parties to view and comment on the proposal. A total of 721 invitations have been sent to local residents within a 500m radius from the site.

An online public consultation was held on the following dates;

Wednesday 20th January 12:30-2pm
Thursday 21st January 6pm-7:30pm

The presentation provided a full overview of the scheme as presented to officers and only 3 members of the public attended.

3.5 Girton Parish Council

On the 16th February 2021 we have presented the scheme to the Girton Parish Council to allow the councillors to familiarise themselves with the proposal ahead of submission.

3.6 Design Enabling Panel

A presentation was made to the Design Enabling Panel on the 13th January where the following feedback was provided: for easier understanding it is have broken it up into categories:

Demolition of the Victorian and other buildings on site
+ A justification for the proposed demolition and design approach was requested and a statement referencing structural report and Building Analysis report is included within paragraph 2.4 of this document;

+ It was noted during the meeting that the design decisions should be informed by site and context analysis. The result is of those analysis is a built form that has been located within the same parameters as the existing building on site to reduce the impact on the Green Belt, with permeable sections placed in strategic locations, to maximise the in-out feel and facilitate long-distance view out;

+ A robust justification, as requested, for the demolition of the existing building is presented within the Existing Building Analysis section of this document and elements relating particularly to sustainability are covered within the Sustainability Statement;

Design Approach

+ It was noted that if the building is to be replaced, the new structure should be of certain quality. In response the client emphasized he is committed to use quality materials and detailing, follow HAPPI guidelines and to erect an energy efficient building that will withstand time

+ A justification of the proposed neo-Georgian style was requested to which the client responded, explaining that the new scheme looks to acknowledge the history of the site, and the timelessness of the classical design, through its choice of material palette and intricate detailing rather than referencing the contemporary housing developments nearby, especially that those are targeting different user group. Immediately opposite the site there is a pub and that's led the design (Beefeater) Probably built 1840/50 - proposal is a 19th Century Regency

Siting and Scale of proposed Care Home Building

+ The local landscape is already characterised by urban qualities relating to the edge of Cambridge and Girton. The Site itself includes the Felix Hotel and associated facilities. The proposal will not add new built form, but it replaces the existing with a building of similar scale and materiality. Overall the local and contextual landscape character is unchanged, and so the green character of Huntington Road is preserved

+ Similarly, there are not adverse effects on the Green Belt and its openness as the proposal is similar in character and volume to the replaced building. Furthermore, the re-location of the proposed building further north-west to the existing footprint and of the car park increases the gap between the edge of Cambridge (Darwin Green) and Girton. This not only preserves the sense of openness of the Green Belt but also improves the setting of the ProW on Whitehouse Lane.

For more detail please refer to LVA and Green Belt Study

Detailed Building Design

+ In response to the panel request to present sectional drawings, detailed sections through the courtyard have been produced and are submitted with this application.

Layout

+ The panel considered the links to demonstrate the potential to create visual interest and an enhanced relationship with the landscape. The links offer a relief in a relatively plain linear form of the elevations to north and south and refined proportions of glazing, bars and detailing add the final touch;

+ The urban design officer, Bonnie Qwok's excellent suggestion of glazed links enable the building to have a permeable core on each elevation;

+ The inclusion of curved bays were investigated, as requested, to provide reference to the old building, however the complexities of including this within the new scheme deviates from the permeable break within the structure and the design team were taken with the elegant link and the relationship the glazing encourages with the landscape.

+ The panel suggested that the imposing front approach would restrict the accessible landscape for residents however the user group require a clear division between public and private amenity space and creating a safe and secure garden environment is essential in ensuring the residents safety

Elevational Treatment

+ Useful dialogue in the meeting, additional planting was discussed and will be considered to assist in providing high summertime shade to the southern aspect. For the northern facing bedrooms the team has considered the panels suggestions and are satisfied that the rooms will create optimum living conditions.

4.0 Design Approach and Concept

4.1 The HAPPI Principles

The HAPPI principles are based on 10 key design criteria:

- + 1. Generous internal space standards, three habitable rooms and flexible layout;
- + 2. Care over placement, size and detail of windows to ensure natural daylighting and allow daylight to circulation space;
- + 3. Layouts maximise natural ventilation, avoid internal corridors and single aspect flats, provision of suitably sized balconies, patios etc;
- + 4. Homes to be designed care ready;
- + 5. Circulation areas become shared spaces to encourage interaction and avoid institutional feel, allow natural surveillance and allow for 'Defensible space';
- + 6. Multi-purpose space to allow residents to meet, undertake activities and provision of guest rooms;
- + 7. Homes to engage positively with the street and natural environment is nurtured through new planting etc;
- + 8. Homes are energy efficient and well insulated, well ventilated and avoid overheating;
- + 9. Provision of adequate storage both outside the home for cycles and mobility aids, and inside the home;
- + 10. Shared external surfaces with priority to pedestrians with due regard to the navigation difficulties that some visually impaired people may experience in such environments;

For details on how the building complies please refer to appendix A of this document

4.2 The Client's Requirements:

- + Propose a building that would create an enhanced aesthetic in an appropriate style that would complement the area;
- + Bedrooms to be minimum 3.5m wide to allow positioning the bed across the bedroom and to accommodate comfortable layout for a wheelchair user;
- + 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;
- + A dedicated wellbeing centre with SPA, hair and beauty salon, reception and waiting area;
- + Upgraded staff facilities;
- + Integration of internal and external spaces- fully accessible and secure outdoor space that is designed and landscaped to provide residents with usable space in which to relax or take part in activities.

4.3 Objectives

- + Within this Design and Access Statement, the project team will explain to officers the changes they have made to the scheme and how this builds on previous discussions, as well as some additional detail on the design inspiration;
- + The Design and Access Statement will also set out the link between the current design and the design inspiration of industrial warehouse as well as why this revised scheme represents a sensitive and appropriate way to bring forward a care home scheme on this site.