

29/03/2023

Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Wandlebury Country Park
Cambridge CB22 3AE
Phone 01223 - 243830
www.cambridgeppf.org

APPEAL BY BROOKGATE LAND LTD AT LAND NORTH OF CAMBRIDGE NORTH STATION, CAMBRIDGE

STATEMENT OF CASE OF CAMBRIDGE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE (RULE 6 PARTY)

LPA REFERENCE: 22/02771/OUT

APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/W0530/W/23/3315611

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:
 - Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
 - Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
 - Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
 - Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.
- 1.2. Cambridge PPF has taken an active interest in the development of North East Cambridge as a strategic development on the edge of Cambridge. We support the use of brownfield land and wish to ensure that any development on the edge of Cambridge retains the green setting and heritage of the city.
- 1.3. The development of the appeal site is of particular interest to Cambridge PPF as it is located on the eastern edge of the North East Cambridge development site, and will be visible from Ditton Meadows, the village of Fen Ditton, the River Cam towpath and from the north/A14. The development of this site will create a new edge to the city visible from long distances. It is vital that this site is designed and developed to the highest standard so that it contributes to the special character of Cambridge.
- 1.4. Cambridge PPF has actively engaged with the applicant. We responded to public consultations in December 2021 and April 2022, and to the application in August 2022 and December 2022. Copies of these comments can be found in Appendix A.

- 1.5. Cambridge PPF's case will deal with the following matters
 - a. Landscape and Townscape
 - b. Heritage

2. Cambridge Past, Present and Futures Case

Landscape and Townscape

- 2.1. Cambridge PPF's case accords with reason for refusal 1 and relates to our objection to the height, scale and design of the proposed buildings, especially those along the eastern site boundary.
- 2.2. It is vital that this site is designed and developed to the highest standard. The development will create a new edge to the city which needs to contribute to the special character of Cambridge.
- 2.3. Paragraph 2.31 of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan list some factors which define the special character of Cambridge and its setting. These include:-
 - Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;
 - A soft green edge to the city;
 - A distinctive urban edge.
- 2.4. Cambridge PPF's case will refer to the design of blocks S6 and S7 and how the design does not make a positive contribution to the Cambridge skyline, city edge or landscape setting.
- 2.5. Cambridge PPF will object to Wild Park not being retained in perpetuity. The park, if correctly planned, provided and managed, will be an important ecological and recreational benefit to the development and the wider area and needs to be retained in perpetuity. It is assumed that the park forms part of the biodiversity net gain and the Environment Act states that habitats should be secured for a minimum of 30 years but the intention is for it to be in perpetuity.
- 2.6. Cambridge PPF will argue that notwithstanding the range of habitat creation within the site, the layout of the residential area, the relatively narrow entrances into Chesterton Gardens and the wall of development of blocks S13-S16 are not conducive to wildlife connectivity across and beyond the development.
- 2.7. Reference will be made to the appellants visualisations and Cambridge PPF photographs in Appendix B.
- 2.8. Cambridge PPF will refer to adopted Local Plan Policies SS/4 (Cambridge Northern Fringe East and Cambridge North railway station), HQ/1(Design Principles), Policy NH/2 (Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character, Policy NH/4 (Biodiversity) and Policy NH/8 (mitigating the impact of development in and adjoining the Green Belt).

Heritage

- 2.9. Cambridge PPF's case accords with reason for refusal 2. It is considered the proposed buildings, due to their height and massing, together with their siting in a row along the eastern edge with minimal gaps between the buildings, would constitute a permanent change to the visual quality of the Fen Ditton and Riverside & Stourbridge Common Conservation Areas and would have a negative effect on the way in which they are experienced and appreciated.
- 2.10. Cambridge PPF will refer to the Fen Ditton Conservation Area and the Riverside & Stourbridge Common Conservation Areas. Reference will be made to the contribution to the special characteristics of the Conservation Areas, of the views across the meadows and river to the appeal site.

2.11. Reference will be made to policies HQ/1 (Design Principles) and Policy NH/14 (Heritage Assets).

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Response to pre-application consultation dated 21.12.21

Response to pre-application consultation dated 5.4.22

Response to planning application 22/02771/OUT dated 7.12.22

Response to planning application 22/02771/OUT dated 7.12.22

Appendix B

Photographs

The Chesterton Partnership

By email to:

info@cambridgenorth.co.uk

21/12/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Response to consultation on Cambridge North

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

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CambridgePPF welcomes this early public engagement on this phase of North East Cambridge prior to the submission of the planning application. I note that there is a current request for a scoping opinion on the forthcoming hybrid planning application.

I have looked at the information provided on your website and wish to make the following comments.

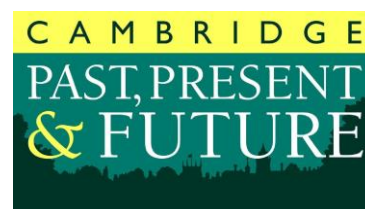
Our comments relate to ensuring that the design of the development is of the high quality required for this edge of city location and does not have a detrimental impact on the landscape and countryside setting to the east.

If you have not already, we encourage you to engage with the Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel.

The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (Dec 2021) requires a distinctive design for North East Cambridge which builds upon the legacy of Cambridge's heritage and characterful new developments. Developments must come together to create a distinctive sense of place.

Policy 6a b) requires the proposed buildings, streets and spaces to have a positive impact on their setting in terms of location on the site, height, scale and form, materials and detailing, wider townscape and landscape impacts and available views.

The eastern edge of the development faces over the Cam Valley and to the higher land of Fen Ditton and will therefore have a significant impact on views of the city from the surrounding countryside.



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Appendix A

The Illustrative architectural models indicate 3 structures (S5, S6, S7) of 7, 5 and 6 storeys in height respectively, with higher buildings beyond. They adjoin the Novotel which is 7 storeys at its highest. The design of the Novotel building is not considered distinctive when compared to the new developments we are seeing elsewhere in Cambridge and could be a hotel anywhere in the country. CambridgePPF are eager that this is not replicated with the adjoining buildings and are keen to see high quality design as required by the AAP.

Policy 6a f) requires the use of high quality and well detailed materials and Policy 6a g) to create a fine grain and human scale streetscape. The development involves large buildings, and the careful and imaginative use of materials and detailing is needed to create this fine grain and break up the bulk of the buildings.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the design and materials of the eastern elevations of plots S5, S6 and S7 to break up the mass and bulk of the structures. Particular attention needs to be given to the design of the mobility hub. Such buildings which lack windows can create very ugly buildings. It is vital that the Hub is developed with a façade which breaks up the bulk of the building, adds articulation, texture, light and shadow to create interest and character. It is also important that any roof plant is considered as part of the overall design, as this could be visible in longer views from the east and north east.

Policy 6a d) of the AAP requires the buildings to be orientated to provide good natural surveillance and create active edges onto public space; and Policy 6a e) for public and private amenity space to be inclusive, usable, safe and enjoyable.

It is unclear from the information provided what the proposed streetscape is to be between the buildings of S5 – S7 and the railway line. The eastern side of S5, S6 and S7 appear to include service access and loading bays, yet offices and laboratories have their entrance onto this road. Employees and visitors will use these entrances and therefore this street needs to be designed to be equally safe and enjoyable spaces, as are the primary and secondary roads within the development.

We object to the provision of at least 10% Biodiversity net gain. A 20% net gain must be provided in line with the AAP and the Councils' strategies of doubling nature.

We support the provision of green/brown roofs. Those being provided on S6 and S7 may help diminish the impact of the development when viewed from the east, however it is not clear what these roofs will entail. It is noted that the indicative ecology areas map include the provision of large, medium and small trees. The trees being provided on the eastern boundary will soften the edge of the development when viewed from the surrounding countryside. The inclusion of large trees along with medium trees which are semi mature when planted would enhance this elevation early in the development rather than waiting 15 years for saplings to mature.

The Gateway indicates a triangle of seating and planting encircled by Cowley Road, Milton Avenue and Compound Road. This does not create a conducive area of amenity space, nor a Station Approach gateway. It would benefit from being joined to and enlarging one of the adjoining green spaces. The area in front of the Knuckle could then be designed to enhance this gateway building.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

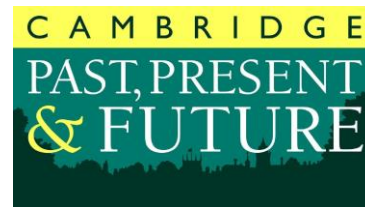
Principal Planning Officer
planning@cambridgeppf.org

Appendix A

The Chesterton Partnership

By email to:

info@cambridgenorth.co.uk



Cambridge Past, Present & Future
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05/04/2022

Dear Sir/Madam

Response to second public consultation on Cambridge North

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

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Our comments on the first consultation raised issues on the impact of the eastern edge of the development on the views from the surrounding countryside. We are therefore pleased to see that the building heights have been lowered, the buildings have been set back further from the site edge with more planting introduced.

Whilst we support the greater articulation to the eastern façade of the buildings, **we remain concerned about the mass and bulk of buildings** (in particular buildings S6 and S7 which are very similar), especially when viewed from the River Cam towpath and Fen Ditton Meadows. As well as articulation of the elevations, there needs to be articulation of the roofscapes. The skyline of Cambridge is broken up by high- and low-rise buildings and with taller church spires. We ask you to reconsider the design of the buildings to introduce greater variety to the skyline and to avoid creating a vast "wall" of development. It is essential that these buildings are assessed from views from the countryside, and that this is demonstrated in the subsequent Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

We are pleased to see that a greater sense of place has been created for the streetscape between the buildings and the railway line. We trust that these improvements will be further developed and refined as you prepare the planning application. This should include species of tree which will grow tall and help to screen the buildings (eg lime sp); careful design of roof top services and careful choice of building materials/cladding to respect the edge of city location.

We welcome your intention to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain.

Appendix A

The consultation documentation states that you have introduced a 'wild habitat' area. I assume that this is the 'wild park' on the northern part of the site. The AAP identifies new large scale green space in this location, but to a different configuration. The 'wild park' is not shown to any detail in the current consultation, other than on the 'Planned Ground Level Ecology Areas' map. I understood from your consultation event that the 'wild park' would provide an area of publicly accessible natural green space. However, in the long term, the attenuation pond would be relocated, the site would be developed with a broad area of wildlife habitat left as a corridor down the centre of the site with development either side.

We are **concerned about the principle of establishing a wildlife habitat and promoting its use to residents and visitors only for it to be partially destroyed in the future**. We object to the 'wild park' being provided as part of the 20% biodiversity net gain for it only to be lost in the long term. The Environment Act states that habitats should be secured for a minimum of 30 years but the intention is for it to be in perpetuity. If the 'wild park' is to be partially developed in the future, then the BNG needs to be provided elsewhere and its development will result in the need for additional net gain.

We raise **concerns about the design of the open space in the residential development**. Best practice is to ensure connectivity between green spaces in order to benefit wildlife. Unfortunately blocks S13-S16 form a barrier between your open space and the allotments and Bramblefields Nature Reserve to the west. A design which allowed for a nature corridor between these sites should be standard practice and we would like to see the design revised to achieve this. This would also have the additional visual benefit of breaking up the mass of the building.

In response to your Wildlife and Ecology details, the reuse of existing soil from the Open Mosaic Habitat to roof top seedbeds on site is welcomed. We trust that management of the construction process will ensure that this happens in practice. We also hope that rainwater harvesting on the roof tops will provide a water supply the roof top growing spaces.

You list that your plans include log piles and deadwood habitats. It is not clear where these are to be located. They can be viewed as untidy areas by residents and visitors and may therefore need to be supported by education. They are more suited to natural green spaces and if they are to be located on the 'wild park', please note our concerns above.

I reiterate that if you have not already, we encourage you to **engage with the Greater Cambridge Design Review panel**.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

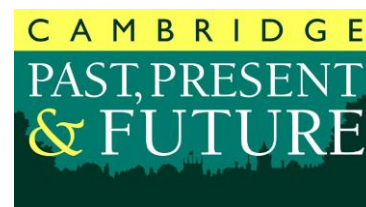
Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer
planning@cambridgeppf.org

02/08/2022

Dear Fiona



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Response to 22/02771/OUT hybrid application for 425 residential units and commercial buildings at Land north of Cambridge North Station, Milton Avenue, Cambridge.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

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Cambridge Past, Present and Future have responded to the developer consultations and whilst we are happy to see that the design has been amended in part in response to comments, we are disappointed to see that the impact of the buildings on views from the Green Belt, especially the River Cam towpath and from the higher land of Fen Ditton have not been fully addressed. **We object to the height, scale and design of the proposal** as it will create a giant 'wall' of development. We request that there is further negotiation on the design of the buildings or that the application is refused as being contrary to policies SS/4, HQ/1 and NH/8.

The development of this site is guided by adopted policy SS/4 (Cambridge Northern Fringe East and Cambridge North railway station). This policy refers to the amount of development, site capacity, viability, timescales and phasing of development being established through an Area Action Plan. The emerging North East Area Action Plan has been approved for proposed submission consultation. However, this is not anticipated until Autumn/Winter 2024. The policies of the AAP therefore have minimal weight and this application could be considered as premature.

Adopted policy HQ/1 (Design Principles) lists 15 design principles including

- enhancing the character of the local urban and rural area and responding to the context of the wider area;
- include variety and interest which creates a positive sense of place whilst also responding to local context and respecting local distinctiveness; and
- 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.
- Include high quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate the development with its surroundings.

Appendix A

The land to the east of the site is Green Belt. Policy NH/8 (mitigating the impact of development in and adjoining the Green Belt) requires development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt to include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.

It is vital that this site is designed and developed to the highest standard. The development will create a new edge to the city which needs to contribute to the special character of Cambridge.

Paragraph 2.31 of the adopted Local Plan list some factors which define the special character of Cambridge and its setting. These include

- Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;
- A soft green edge to the city;
- A distinctive urban edge.

We object to the visual impact of the mass and bulk of buildings on the surrounding landscape, especially when viewed from the River Cam towpath and Fen Ditton Meadows. Buildings S6 and S7 are two large buildings creating an expansive roofscape of similar height.

Although only guidance at this stage, the Area Action Plan indicates the building heights for this area to be 4-6 storeys typically (13m-19m), maximum landmark building of 7 storeys (22m). Heights are assumed at 3m per floor with 4m at ground floor and are inclusive of plant. (Figure 21). Figure 21 indicates a landmark building at the corner of building S9 at the entrance to the site. The proposed buildings S6 and S7 are 22.1m high and therefore exceed emerging Area Action Plan policy.

The development needs to include articulation of the roofscapes. The skyline of Cambridge is broken up by high- and low-rise buildings and with taller church spires. This is part of the special character of Cambridge recognised by the Local Plan. It is also recognised in the applicant's Environmental Statement (Chapter 12 Landscape and Visual) which identifies the city skyline as one of the components of the landscape/cityscape (paragraph 12.137). Buildings S6 and S7 are 20.9 – 21.1m in height, providing a variation of only 1.2m.

The impact of the development is recognised in the Environmental Statement which states that the proposed development will result in adverse change to the River Cam Valley, and the landscape setting of Fen Ditton (Table 12.3). The Statement considers that these adverse effects, will be mitigated by high quality design and tree planting (Table 12.4). We do not agree that the design of the buildings on the eastern edge are of sufficient quality to meet the requirements of policy HQ/1 and NH/8, and provide the distinctive urban edge Cambridge deserves.

In considering the Year 15 Visual Effects, the Environment Statement says that the proposed planting on the eastern edge will have the greatest influence in mitigating the prominence of the buildings by helping to soften the continuous built form and create visual breaks. We consider that the area between the railway and the buildings should be deep enough to include trees which can grow sufficiently large to have any hope of mitigating such large buildings, the planting will need to include species of trees can grow sufficiently tall, such as lime sp and London Plane. The typical spread of such trees is 10-20m. At the time of writing the online measuring tool is not working so I am unable to measure the width of the soft and hard landscaping in this location. Officers are asked to look at this detail and if there is insufficient room proposed for the tree screen, the application should be refused as being contrary to policy HQ/1(m) and NH/8(3). We note that it would be around 40-50 years before such trees grew to heights that would provide screening.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the roof plan of the buildings. Solar panels, green roofs and structures housing services are proposed for the roof tops and the latter especially must not be visible.

Appendix A

The cladding of the buildings also needs to be carefully considered to add texture, interest and character. Approval of materials should be conditioned to ensure that they are appropriate to the edge of city location.

We strongly support the provision of the Wild Park which needs to be safeguarded from development.

Indications from earlier developer consultations were that in the long term the balancing pond would be relocated, the site would be developed with a broad area of wildlife habitat left as a corridor down the centre of the site with development either side. The park is an important ecological and recreational benefit to the development and the wider area and needs to be retained in perpetuity. It is assumed that the park forms part of the biodiversity net gain and the Environment Act states that habitats should be secured for a minimum of 30 years but the intention is for it to be in perpetuity.

We raise **concerns about the design of the open space in the residential development.** Best practice is to ensure connectivity between green spaces in order to benefit wildlife. Unfortunately blocks S13-S16 form a barrier between the open space and the allotments and Bramblefields Nature Reserve to the west. A design which allowed for a nature corridor between these sites should be standard practice and we would like to see the design revised to achieve this. This would also have the additional visual benefit of breaking up the mass of the building.

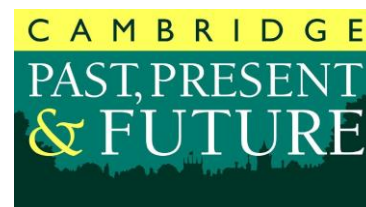
The development needs to be subject to an approved Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. The Council needs to be assured that there are sufficient funds to implement the Plan. The Plan should look beyond the 30-year requirement of biodiversity net gain to management of the landscaping and open space in perpetuity.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely
Sarah Nicholas
Principal Planning Officer

07/12/2022

Dear Fiona



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Response to Amendments to 22/02771/OUT hybrid application for 425 residential units and commercial buildings at Land north of Cambridge North Station, Milton Avenue, Cambridge

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Cambridge Past Present and Future have considered the feedback response to our initial representations. We are disappointed that there appears to be little amendment to the scheme but rather a justification of their design. We are not convinced by the additional explanation and our objections remain.

These comments need to be read in conjunction with our initial comments.

Eastern Edge

We retain our objection to the visual impact of the laboratory blocks (S6 and S7) on the eastern edge development.

In response to this objection the applicant refers to the Visual Assessment and Technical Visualisations. However, we consider that these illustrate our objections.

- The Visual Assessment (Appendix 12.3) demonstrates that there will be a significant visual impact when viewed from the river towpath.
 - The impact from viewpoint 8 is identified as 'major adverse'.
- The technical visualisations (Appendix 12.4)
 - viewpoint 6 demonstrates how visible the eastern elevations are even after 15 years of landscape growth. It also demonstrates that the higher blocks behind are visible and increasing the perception of a wall of development.

Appendix A

- Viewpoint 07b from Baits Bite Lock demonstrates how the bulk of the development will impact views of the edge of Cambridge, even from some distance.
 - Viewpoint 8 - View from footpath 86/6 Fen Ditton visualises the major adverse impact identified in the Visual Assessment. From this location, one will not only be able to see blocks S6 and S7 but also A9/10 (1 Chesterton Square) and the residential blocks. These latter blocks are higher than S6/S7. The impact does not diminish even after 15 years of vegetation growth.
 - Viewpoint 9 – demonstrates how the blocks are visible above the roofline of Fen Ditton. Again, the taller blocks behind are visible, increasing the overall visual bulk of the development with large expanses of flat roof and little contrast in height. There is little difference to this view even after 15 years of landscape growth.
 - Viewpoint 15 – The development is clearly visible across the meadows and appear as a single wall of development.
 - Viewpoint 20 – The development is very visible. The hotel is already very visible from this location and therefore the additions of the mobility hub, blocks S6 and S7 will dominate. As with viewpoint 8, block A9/10 and the residential block is visible. It demonstrates the little contrast in height across the development.
- Heights/articulation/skyline

The feedback response to our representation explains that bulk of blocks S6 and S7 has been reduced by breaking each block into 4 fingers which are articulated up and back and introducing terracing. The highest parts of blocks S6 and S7 are 22.1m high and the lower 'finger' being 20.9m high. This is only a difference of 1.2m. This exceeds the height set out in the emerging Area Action Plan. The impact that these heights have on views from the surrounding countryside has been demonstrated in the visualisation exercise (see above).

The articulation aims to positively contribute to the Cambridge skyline. It is not considered that this has been successfully achieved. The visualisations demonstrate how, when viewed from the north or east, the skyline of the development is dominated by large blocks with even taller blocks behind (Viewpoints 6, 8, 9, 15 and 20). The modulations are hard to read from a distance and the overarching impression is that of a solid wall of development, with little variation in height, creating a hard boundary to the city.

- Greening

Planting of the terraces is proposed to soften the edge. This is considered to be a cosmetic solution to the problem and is dependant on the successful maintenance of the planting. It does not address the fundamental issue of the height and bulk of the buildings.

- Tree planting

We welcome the planting of large, medium and small trees along the eastern edge. The proposed London Plane has an eventual spread of about 20m. The width of Cowley Road between the buildings and the railway track is shown as 19.1m. The tree canopy would cover the entire width. Pollarding of the trees would remove their benefit as a tree screen and softening the development edge. It is considered that the buildings are still not sufficiently set back from the railway line to accommodate successful tree planting.

Wild Park

We are disappointed to learn that the wild park will not be retained in perpetuity. Any biodiversity net gain which the Park provides for the original development must be replaced, as well as providing a net gain for the redevelopment of the Wild Park.

Residential development

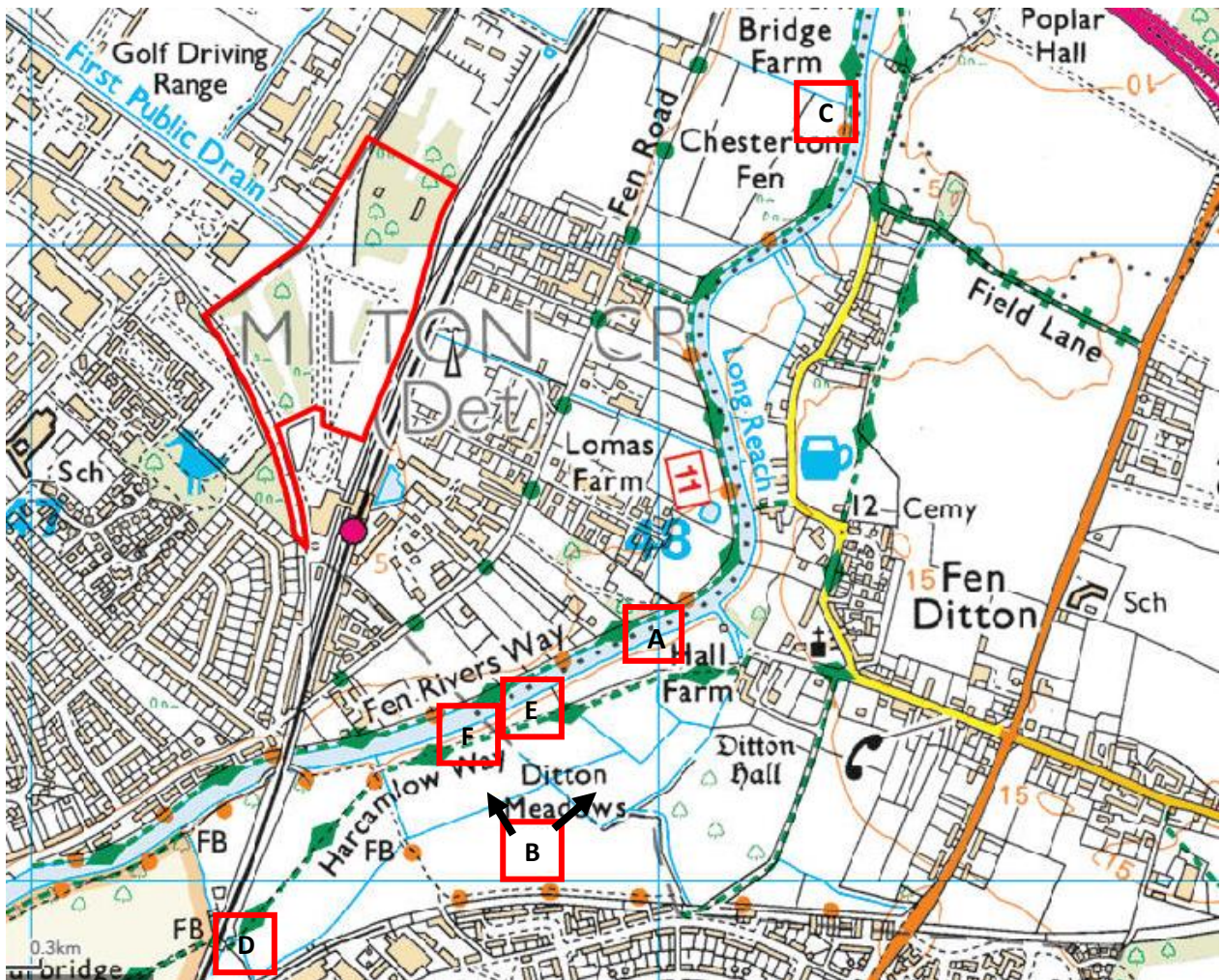
We retain our objection to the design of the open space and lack of connectivity to natural areas to the west.

The explanation provided about sufficient green spaces and planting to provide a nature corridor, bat and bird 'hop over' routes to the Wild Park, opening in fences, tree planting, green roofs and invertebrate friendly planting does not resolve our concerns. The conservation objectives set out in paragraph 2.4.4 of Ecological Design Strategy include 'retain habitat connectivity across the site and provide linkages to the wider environment through the retention of corridors around the perimeter of the site. Notwithstanding the range of habitat creation within the site, the layout of the residential area, the relatively narrow entrances into Chesterton Gardens and the wall of development of blocks S13-S16 are not conducive to wildlife connectivity across the development.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely
Sarah Nicholas
Principal Planning Officer

Appendix B
APPENDIX B: Photographs



Viewpoint A



Appendix B

Viewpoint B looking north and east



Appendix B

Viewpoint C



Viewpoint D from the footbridge over the railway line



Appendix B

Viewpoint E



Viewpoint F

