

Land to the north of Cambridge North Station, Milton Avenue, Cambridge
Brookgate Land Limited
Mr Michael John Derbyshire
APP/W0530/W/23/3315611



**SUMMARY PROOF OF
EVIDENCE
MICHAEL JOHN
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Summary Proof of Evidence

- 1.1 The appeal proposal is an outstanding scheme prepared by a number of leading architects and landscape designer. It has a significant number of benefits that I describe as very great overall. The scheme strives to be a sustainable new destination for the City and South Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The appeal scheme will be a healthy, inclusive, low-carbon development with a vibrant mix of high-quality homes, workplaces, services and social spaces, fully integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods. Mr Ludwig in his evidence shows how the masterplan has taken a strategic approach that aims to strike a balance between preserving and showcasing elements of the site's character, while also delivering a scheme that fully realises the potential of the site. This responds to reason for refusal one.
- 1.3 The Framework emphasises the need to make the most efficient possible use of previously developed land in sustainable locations; the appeal site is one of the most sustainable locations in the region. Significant public funding has already been committed to the Site in the form of the new Cambridge North station and it is right that it is appropriate that maximum benefit is derived from this investment.
- 1.4 The appeal proposal does not prejudice the delivery of the wider AAP should that come forward, rather, it is an enabler to its delivery. At year end 2022 there was demand for just over 2m sq ft of office and laboratory space across Cambridge by both domestic and global business. The pipeline for offices and laboratories is extremely constrained and does not meet this demand, this has serious repercussions of the growth of the science and tech sector in the UK.
- 1.5 The LPA recognise the importance of the clustering of knowledge intensive industries to the local and national economy. The Framework places significant weight on the importance of economic development and states that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of clusters.
- 1.6 They also recognise the importance of placing development around Cambridge North Station. The LPA do not dispute that there is a need for new office and laboratory buildings, they state that the weight to this benefit has been overstated, yet at the same time have identified the appeal site is a strategic location for employment growth and performs an essential role in providing for any overspill should demand for accommodation be higher.
- 1.7 The change of pace of technology is accelerating rapidly and the role of the planning system is not to hinder or frustrate that change but to facilitate it and build upon the UK existing centres of excellence. I do not consider the need for new offices and laboratories in this location is overstated, the need is compelling. The appeal site is one

of the best locations to meet that need. The benefits I refer to as “great” derive from the appeal scheme.

- 1.8 In a similar vein, there is a need for high quality homes. The scheme provides a mix of high-quality homes, fully compliant with affordable housing policies.
- 1.9 Contrary to the reasons for refusal, it is my evidence that the appeal scheme is compliant with the development plan when read as a whole and that there are no other material circumstances which should be weighed against this conclusion. In fact, all the other material considerations that I identify further reinforce my conclusions that this is the right scheme in the right place.
- 1.10 It is common ground with the LPA and the Rule 6 (6) party that the scheme has an impact on identified heritage assets and that this harm is less than substantial.
- 1.11 I attach the weight dictated by statute and case law to heritage and conclude that any harm to heritage is clearly and manifestly outweighed by the extensive public benefits of the Appeal scheme.
- 1.12 The harm alleged within reason for refusal 2 and 3 is in respect of alleged poor living conditions for future occupiers of the proposed new housing, particularly the north facing single aspect windows; an alleged poor standard of design; the less than substantial harm to a number of heritage assets and the landscape and visual impact on a number of certain views and a valued local landscape.
- 1.13 There is no unacceptable impact on highway safety or capacity and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe, any residual impact on the highway network can be adequately mitigated through the mitigation package proposed.
- 1.14 The EA objection is not specific to the appeal scheme. It is a lack of confidence regarding the CW WRMP24. CW have confirmed in writing that they have no objection to our scheme and that adequate provision for water has been made in their forward planning.
- 1.15 I have set out the economic, social and environmental benefits in Section 7 of my evidence and conclude they are very great. They outweigh the limited harm that I identify above by a very considerable margin.
- 1.16 In my opinion the determination that would be in accordance with development plan would be to allow the appeal. Material considerations do not indicate otherwise but instead give even greater weight to the arguments in favour of allowing the appeal.

- 1.17 If contrary to my evidence the Secretary of State does not consider the appeal scheme is in accordance with the development plan when read as a whole, then the material considerations, particularly the very great benefits, indicate that planning permission should be granted nonetheless.



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