

Rebuttal Proof of Evidence Design

Land north of Cambridge North Station, Cambridge

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Rebuttal Proof has been prepared to save time at the inquiry and provides a written response on various matters of disagreement with that in mind. It does not purport to respond in relation to each area of disagreement; and the absence of any comment on a specific issue does not indicate my (or the Council's) acceptance of any of the points made in the Appellant's evidence.
- 1.2 Regarding the evidence of the Appellant's witness, Greg Willes BA (Hons) Dip Arch (Cantab), RIBA ARB [CD8.06] there are three points of rebuttal relating to the following areas:
- The success of S4 in its response to local context
 - The success of the designs for S6 and S7 in breaking down the bulk of the buildings and add a varied, appropriate frontages to Station Row and the Eastern Edge
 - The extensive use of double-stacking cycle racks in S4, S6 and S7

2. S4's response to local context

- 2.1 S4 is located in between 1 Cambridge Square and the residential quarter S11-S21. Like 1 Cambridge Square and the residential quarter, S4 has elevations on both Milton Avenue and Chesterton Way.
- 2.2 In Paragraph 4.3 of his proof, Mr Willis states that the design development of S4 supports the masterplan by *"building mass and elevations responding positively to adjacent uses"* and *"building entrances responding to the adjacent public realm."* In paragraph 4.20 and 4.21 Mr Willis says that the Architectural Design Principles (Commercial) as set out in the Masterplan [CD1.04] have been applied to *"[...] respond positively to the character of each adjacent area [...]"*.
- 2.3 Furthermore, Mr Willis makes several references to the role of S4 as a mediator between the development around Cambridge North Station, and specifically the office building 1 Cambridge Square, and the proposed residential quarter to the north (Paragraphs 4.4, 4.21 & 4.22, 6.3, 6.5, 8.4 and 10.2).
- 2.4 It is agreed that S4 needs to respond positively to adjacent uses and adjacent public realm to support the masterplan. It is also agreed that S4 needs to fulfil a role as mediator between 1 Cambridge Square and the residential quarter (see Paragraph 2.12 of Design Statement of Common Ground [CD6.07]). It is not agreed that the proposed design successfully achieves either of these objectives. This is for several reasons as set out in further detail below.

Ground floor activation on Chesterton Way

- 2.5 1 Cambridge Square introduces ground floor activation (in the form of retail units) along part of its elevation on Chesterton Way. Further west, the proposed residential buildings S13-S16 also consider Chesterton Way as a frontage environment, with entrances to communal lobbies as well as individual dwellings accessed directly from the street.

- 2.6 However, rather than responding to this character and strengthening Chesterton Way as a front door address, S4 locates all “back uses” (sub station, fire escape, access to car park etc) along this elevation as illustrated in my Proof of Evidence Page 33 Figure 19 [CD9.04]. This undermines the objectives of the masterplan that seeks to strengthen the “*local and residential character of the road*” (Mr Ludewig’s Proof of Evidence paragraph 6.8.6, page 86 [CD8.04]). Furthermore, by creating a ‘gap’ in active frontages along Chesterton Way, S4 weakens the potential relation between 1 Cambridge Square and the residential quarter, rather than acting as a mediator between them.

Landscaping along Chesterton Way

- 2.7 1 Cambridge Square and residential buildings S13-S16 are set back from the edge of the street to create space for soft landscaping and / or tree planting. However, the building line of S4 is pushed right up to the back of the pavement. There is no space set aside for tree planting or other landscaping to soften the impact of the building and link the proposed tree line in front of 1 Cambridge Square with the proposed landscaping outside the residential development.
- 2.8 The lack of landscaping in front of S4 is likely to appear as a ‘gap’ between the emerging character of Chesterton Way in front of 1 Cambridge Square and the proposed character of the street outside S13-S16, rather than a mediator between the two.

The massing / grain of S4

- 2.9 In his proof, Mr Willis states that One Milton Avenue is “*of a suitable urban scale, building on the cluster of commercial development around Cambridge Square*” (paragraphs 4.21) and “*a sensitive building as it skilfully steps in scale and form, responding to the residential building heights north along Milton Avenue.*” (paragraph 4.22).
- 2.10 Firstly, I do not agree that the proposed “steps in scale and form” adequately respond to the neighbouring residential development. The massing / urban grain of 1 Cambridge Square is characterised by a large triangular footprint measuring approximately 65m x 45m x 80m (Illustrative Masterplan Rev B [CD2.88]). The residential quarter on the other hand, has a finer grain, consisting of several blocks that are heavily stepped (in plan and height) to appear as a series of smaller (linked) buildings varying between 15-30m in length and 10-20m in depth (Design and Access Statement 6.2 Residential Site S11-S21 Part 2 of 5 Page 188 [CD1.08b]).
- 2.11 Yet like 1 Cambridge Square, S4 has a large footprint of 40m by 50-70m. Other than along Milton Avenue, there is no significant stepping in plan form to help break down the mass / scale of the building or the apparent length of the facades. The western elevation along Chesterton Way – which transitions to the finer grained residential block S13-S16 - has no stepping at all and appears flat and monotonous. Overall, the building appears as one “solid” block, akin to 1 Cambridge Square and very different from the proposed residential buildings.

Height of S4

- 2.12 In my opinion, the height of S4 is detrimental to longer distance views from the east and the west, as set out in my Proof of Evidence (Figure 7, 8 9 and 10, page 25-26).

- 2.13 In his proof, Mr Willis appears to justify the proposed height of S4 as “to match the height of 1 Cambridge Square” (paragraph 6.7). I do not agree that the proposed height of S4 is properly matched to that of 1 Cambridge Square, not that it is required to do so in its role as a mediator building.
- 2.14 S4 steps up in height from 1 Cambridge Square; only marginally so when considering height of both plants (30.835m for S4, 30.2m for 1 Cambridge Square), but more significantly so when comparing the more visually dominant brick parapets of both buildings along the Milton Avenue elevation (27.91m vs 23,27m for S4 and 1 Cambridge Square respectively), as illustrated in my Proof of Evidence (CD9.04, page 28, Figure 12).
- 2.15 Furthermore, I do not feel that the need to match building heights in a mediator building is adequately justified, as buildings of varied height can sit comfortably next to each other as demonstrated elsewhere in the masterplan (i.e. S5 and S6).

3. S6 and S7 massing and visual interest

- 3.1 In his Proof of Evidence, Mr Willis sets out the design approach of dividing the buildings S6 and S7 in a series of fingers to create the appearance of the building consisting of a row of smaller linked elements (paragraph 15.2, 15.3 and 15.4, 17.3 and 17.6). The introduction of ‘green’ terraces, as well as the materials strategy serves to further articulate these fingers (paragraph 15.6, 17.4 and 17.6)
- 3.2 It is agreed that this approach is successful in helping to break down the apparent mass of the building when viewed from nearby. However, the approach is less successful in long distance views from where these subtle details are more difficult to read. In paragraph 13.12 and 15.6 of his proof, Mr Willis states that the introduction of the green terraces and change of materials were more successful in articulating the fingers of the building than a subtle difference in height. Although this is not disputed, in my opinion it is the silhouette of S6 and S7 (and the buildings beyond that rise above S6 and S7) that dominates the view as illustrated in Figure 33 (page 29) of his proof.
- 3.3 Furthermore, in my opinion the finger approach loses most of its impact by applying a near identical design to both S6 and S7. The narrow gap between S6 and S7 can not be seen from most angles. Instead, the two buildings visually merge together to appear as a uniform block of some 150 metres in length. In paragraph 15.5 of his proof, Mr Willis states that S6 and S7 address the eastern edge as a series of highly articulated and beautifully detailed terraces. Yet in my opinion, the trick of using fingers to make the building seem like as a series of smaller connecting elements loses its effectiveness as the same two elements (i.e. the light coloured civic grid and the darker coloured vertical grid) are repeated too many times. What appears as “variation” in a single building, starts to become repetitive to the point of monotony when applied across both S6 and S7. Thus, the two buildings appear as a single, relatively uniform and very large block as demonstrated in Figure 40 (page 33) of Mr Willis’s Proof of Evidence.
- 3.4 This has a negative impact on the appearance of the Eastern Edge from where the buildings appear as a monotonous building line which Mr Willis agrees should be avoided (paragraph 13.11). It also has a negative impact on the character of Station Row where S6 and S7 make up over 2/3rds of the total length of the street and does not provide the visual diversity and richness of character that the

Masterplan seeks to create (as stated on page 60 of Mr Ludewig's Proof of Evidence – Architectural Design Principles APDPC 1 and ADPC4 [CD8.04d]).

- 3.5 Furthermore, the repeated architectural design across two buildings is out of character to the rest of the masterplan, which promotes a very diverse style of architectural designs across the commercial buildings S4 to S9.

4. Double-stacked cycle stands

- 4.1 With reference to cycle parking in both S4 and S6 & S7, Mr Willis acknowledges that the majority of the cycle parking is delivered in a *“modern double stacked arrangement within the basement”* (paragraphs 7.4 and 16.4 respectively). He continues to say that this is *“to ensure as much of the ground floor as possible is preserved as active frontage”*. As the cycle stores are located in the basement, increasing the proportion of Sheffield stands / single stack stands would have no adverse impact on the amount of active frontage that can be delivered at the ground floor.
- 4.2 Therefore, this does not provide an appropriate justification for the extensive use of double stack stands which are relatively inconvenient to use.