

..LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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21/03822/FUL. Erection of R&D building and associated decked car park, landscaping and associated infrastructure. Site 1, Granta Park, Abington, Cambridge.

Little Abington Parish Council was surprised that it was not consulted on this application. It has been agreed on numerous occasions that Little Abington Parish Council should be consulted on all proposed developments on Granta Park. In addition, this development would be close to several residential properties along Newmarket Road, Little Abington and due to its scale it may impact on other local residents.

The proposal was discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 13 September. The Parish Council agreed to recommend refusal on the following grounds.

Failure to consult effectively. Little Abington Parish Council was excluded as were the residential properties in Newmarket Road.

Concerns about the scale of the development. The building will be out of keeping with the rural environment of the Abingtons. It is not a suburban location as the application claims. At present, although visible from several points around the Abingtons the buildings at Granta Park largely blend into the local environment without too much intrusion. This one would be four storeys high and 22 metres tall, taller than all the other buildings on Granta Park.

There may be light pollution – some activities on the Granta Park site are 24/7. The Parish Council is concerned that lighting of the top floor of the car park may be visible from Newmarket Road, Bourn Bridge Road and West Field and therefore intrusive in the rural environment. The Council requests visualisations of the views from West Field and at Bourn Bridge Cottages, Newmarket Road to ensure this is not the case.

On site traffic noise. The development includes a six-floor multi-storey car park. The movement of cars especially on the upper floors is likely to generate noise that could well be heard in the village at busy times.

Increased traffic and traffic noise. There is a Travel Management Plan (2017-2022) associated with this application. However, to date the infrastructure improvements described in section 3.45 have not been delivered. If this proposal is approved by SCDC a condition should be that these infrastructure improvements should be carried out by the end of 2022.

Such a large car park suggests there is going to be an increase in traffic on the roads around the Abingtons with consequential increases in noise and concerns about road safety given the incidence of speeding already witnessed on Newmarket Road where there are residential properties and school playing fields. Newmarket Road is being proposed as a cycleway route. Road safety should be an important consideration. The Parish Council suggests that the speed limit on Newmarket Road is decreased to 40 mph to make it safer for cyclists.

If access to the site is via the A505 the increased volume of traffic will cause even more delays and blockages on the roundabout beside Granta Park unless there are improvements

to access arrangements. The Parish Council would like a box junction around the Granta Park roundabout to make it easier for residents to negotiate the roundabout during rush hour to access the A505.

Another option would be to consider creating a new entrance on Pampisford Road however there are already concerns about traffic and road safety along that route which may also become a cycle route.

Pedestrian access to Granta Park – Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of the Travel Plan state that there are pedestrian footways linking Great and Little Abington to Granta Park. This is incorrect. There are no footways in several sections of the perimeter of Granta Park including on Newmarket Road, near the Granta Park Roundabout and along the length of Pampisford Road. Visitors arriving on foot to Granta Park must walk along uneven road verges or at times step out into the road where there is no verge. LAPC would like footways to be created along Newmarket Road and Pampisford Road. This would receive a lot of support from local residents.

Noise from the site is already a problem which has not been satisfactorily resolved since it was first reported to SCDC several years ago. The noise from Granta Park can be heard at several locations in Little Abington and affects the sleep of several of the residents. The Parish Council notes that ventilation plants will be located in the roof plant at the top of the new building and would like to know if any work has been done to model the impact of noise from this large new building on the noise already being generated on the Granta Park site. In addition to noise being generated from the building, there is a risk of the rooftop providing a new surface to reflect noise back towards the Abingtons.

Bus parking. We note that the travel plan includes more bus services to the site. There needs to be adequate on-site parking for these buses. At the moment they park at the old Fourwentways roundabout and on Newmarket Road causing obstruction and increasing hazards there. One proposal that has been made to managers at Granta Park is to open the bus service to local residents. No action was taken

Impact on wildlife and biodiversity. One benefit of recent lockdowns, with less traffic and activity on the site, has been the increase in biodiversity. The Parish Council is concerned that light and noise pollution from the new building and also from the multi-storey car park will affect local owls and species of bat that feed and roost in the Abingtons.

Heritage Assessment of the Landscape Associated with Abington Hall. SCDC will be aware that the landscape around Abington Hall was designed by Humphrey Repton in the early 19th century. The linear belt of trees that is adjacent to the proposed building is called Lagden's Grove and is part of the landscaping of Abington Hall, a Grade II listed building. The perimeter belt of trees around the Park was designed to visually separate the Park from the surrounding agricultural land. The tall height of the proposed building will intrude above the tree line and degrade the appearance of the Park from Newmarket Road and Bourn Bridge Road.

Site development masterplan. Finally, the Parish Council queried if SCDC still has a copy of the masterplan agreed when development of the site was first proposed and if this and other recent developments are compliant with it.