

BRADWELLS COURT
CAMBRIDGE

2nd DRAFT

JOINT PLANNING BRIEF – March 2002
Cambridge City Council
Land Securities

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INTRODUCTION

❑ The Location

Bradwell's Court is a key location and gateway to the shopping and historic core of Cambridge City Centre. It adjoins Christ's Pieces, important open space, the bus station at Drummer Street and the important historic building of Christ's College and Emmanuel College.

❑ The Site

Bradwell's Court is a 1960s shopping arcade with ancillary leisure and office uses. It is identified in the approved Cambridge Local Plan 1996 as a suitable site for redevelopment for retail and mixed use purposes.

❑ The Proposals

Land Securities propose to redevelop the precinct in its entirety to provide new retail units fronting St Andrew's Street and the reopened Christ's Lane, A3 uses fronting a new square adjoining Christ's Pieces with apartments and student housing at upper levels.

❑ Process

Land Securities and Cambridge City Council have agreed to produce a joint development brief for consultation in advance of the submission of applications for planning permission, conservation area consent and listed building consent in the autumn of 2002.

❑ Purpose of the Brief

The purpose of this brief is to summarise agreed development principles and an overall framework for detailed scheme design, and to establish criteria by which applications for planning permission, conservation area consent and listed building consent will be judged.

BACKGROUND

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The area between Christ's College and Emmanuel College has been developed since the 15th century, adopting its present form in the 1960s. Bradwell's Court opened in 1962 a development of twenty shops set around a central pedestrian walkway that passes out into the adjoining streets from beneath openings in the north and south faces of the building. It underwent minor refurbishments in the early 1990s but otherwise remains relatively unaltered. The site is a major thoroughfare linking the two retail cores of the City but is rundown and failing to live up to its full potential.

VISION FOR THE SITE

To transform a key, but under utilised, site in the historic core of Cambridge into a new mixed use development of the highest quality by:

- creating a GATEWAY retail offer in this key location in the retail core;
- providing a new PUBLIC SQUARE adjoining the bus station and Christ's Pieces as a first point of arrival from public transport;
- reopening the HISTORIC STREET of Christ's Lane as a pedestrian only thoroughfare linking the proposed square and Christ's Pieces and the bus station to St Andrew's Street;
- creating a distinctive LANDMARK BUILDING of contemporary style and highest quality of design as a new focal point in the city;
- respecting the setting of the site and its neighbouring listed college buildings in the Conservation Area.

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CONTEXT - GENERAL

- Cambridge City Centre is a popular destination for shopping and consistently ranks within the top six destinations in the country. The City performs a regional and sub-regional role in providing a high quality retail offer.
- There is ongoing demand from many retailers requiring modern accommodation in Cambridge city centre, and a shortage of suitable accommodation.
- St Andrew's Street and Bradwell's Court perform an important role in the retail function of the City Centre, providing primary frontage retail units. Bradwell's Court currently provides some sq m of primary frontage retail floorspace.
- In addition to its retail function, Bradwell's Court represents a key route for pedestrians moving between Market Street, the Bus Station and the Grafton Centre. Indeed the area immediately around the entrance to Bradwell's Court on St Andrew's Street experiences amongst the highest pedestrian activity in the City Centre.
- The existing townscape and environment of the area around St Andrew's Street is recognised as one of the least attractive parts of the historic centre with blocks of institutional and commercial and other differing ages and styles. The conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cycles is also recognised as a problem in this part of the City Centre.

CONTEXT - LOCAL

- Bradwell's Court comprises a purpose-built, arcade-style shopping precinct built in the early 1960s. The precinct is predominantly retail based with 17 units on the ground floor and ancillary office accommodation provided at first floor level. A small leisure facility is also currently situated on the first floor.
- The precinct fronts onto St Andrew's Street between the Prudential Building and Christ's College and is located opposite both St Andrew the Great Church and the Lion Yard Shopping Centre. Pedestrian access runs through the precinct from St Andrew's Street to the bus station and Christ's Pieces beyond.
- Bradwell's Court provides a poor and dated shopping environment with units too small by modern standards. The site is in clear need of improvement and the opportunity exists to redevelop the site to provide modern shopping facilities to meet the needs of retailers and shoppers whilst improving the character and appearance of this part of the historic centre.
- Bradwell's Court is bounded by St Andrew's Street, Christ's Lane and the listed buildings of Christ's College, the important open space of Christ's Pieces which gives way to Drummer Street bus station, the historic Emmanuel College and the Prudential Building.
- These adjacent buildings and uses remain in the future and the proposals for Bradwell's Court will need to be designed to respect them.

CONTEXT - TOWNSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

- The historic core of Cambridge is of international importance with grand listed buildings, groups of modest traditional buildings and a series of streets and squares and open spaces.
- Immediate neighbours to Bradwell's Court referred to above are:
 - Christ's College - *[summary of listed building description]*
 - Christ's Pieces - *[summarise historic and functional importance of open space]*
 - Emmanuel College - *[summary of listed building consent and characteristics]*
- An important part of the site is Christ's Lane, an historic street which has been inaccessible to the public since the 1960s and which is currently a poor quality service route for Christ's College and Bradwell's Court.
- *[Brief architectural description of the style, condition and elevational treatment of Bradwell's Court.]*

OR PHOTO



ACCESS, ACCESSIBILITY AND LINKAGES

- Bradwell's Court is a gateway to the retail core of St Andrew's Street and a first point of arrival for many people using the adjacent bus station.
- The pedestrianised arcade is an important and well used link but its environmental quality is poor and the interface between the bus station, service access to Argos and Bradwell's Court and Christ's Pieces is a point of conflict between cyclists, buses, pedestrians and service vehicles.
- St Andrew's Street is a heavily used route for pedestrians, cyclists and buses and taxis.
- Redevelopment provides the opportunity to:
 - rationalise servicing by removal of the existing bay across the rear frontage of Bradwell's Court;
 - create a new public square and active uses as an attractive gateway space and interface between the development, Christ's Lane, the bus station and Christ's Pieces;
 - reopen Christ's Lane as a pedestrianised thoroughfare linking to St Andrew's Street and the City Centre core;
 - improve pedestrian circulation and movement and provide appropriate facilities for cyclists;
 - agree appropriate hours for deliveries and servicing via Drummer Street.

POLICY CONTEXT

The planning policy context for the proposed redevelopment of Bradwell's Court comprises national, regional and local policy which can be summarised as follows:

Planning Policy Guidance

Central Government's Planning Policy Guidance Notes form the background advice against which the proposed development will be considered. PPGs1, 6, 13 and 15 are of most relevance.

PPG1, General Policy and Principles (Revised, February 1997) affirms the role of the planning system to meet the needs of a growing and competitive economy in providing for new development. It encourages mixed-use development in areas easily accessible by public transport, particularly town centres and emphasises the importance of good quality design.

PPG6, Town Centres and Retail Developments (June 1996), sets out the Government's objectives for town centres. These include:-

- To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres;
- To place an emphasis on the identification and promotion of sites for development in town centres;
- To maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector; and
- To ensure the availability of a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities to which people have easy access by a choice of means of transport (PPG6, para 1.1).

PPG13, Transport (2001), sets out the Government's objectives on transport. The main objectives are to integrate development and transport proposals to:

- Promote more sustainable transport choices;
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

PPG15, Planning and the Historic Environment, requires development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

Regional Planning Guidance

Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) was approved by the Secretary of State in November 2000 and contains strategic guidance on the East Anglia region with a particular focus on the Cambridge Sub-Region, having regard to the environmental capacity of the city. The main objectives include:

- Focusing most new development on the main towns and city centres;
- Enhance the attractiveness of centres;
- Promote high quality urban design and the conservation of features of architectural or historical importance.

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Structure Plan

Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995

- Limits city centre redevelopment by its environmental capacity (SP18/18)
- Seeks to safeguard and enhance the character of Cambridge (SP18/19).

Local Plan

Cambridge Local Plan 1996

- The Local Plan identifies Bradwell's Court as a site appropriate for mixed use redevelopment (site 11.3) comprising primary shopping floorspace and arts/entertainment space with private or student residential accommodation above (Policy SH7).
- In considering any proposals for the redevelopment of the site, the Council would welcome the reopening of Christ's Lane.
- The Council will support the removal or replacement of buildings which detract from the character of a Conservation Area (Policy BE29).
- The general strategy for the Local Plan is that where changes of use are sought in the primary shopping frontage, Class A2/A3 uses will be acceptable subject to a number of provisions, including the need to avoid creating a continuous frontage of non-A1 uses (Policy SH2).
- The Council will encourage the inclusion of arts and entertainment activities on sites in the central area which come forward for development, particularly those identified in Policy SH7 (Policy RL24).
- On non-residential developments within the central and intermediate areas the Council will discourage car parking provision at the development other than operational or disabled parking. Instead contributions by way of commuted payments will be sort.

Cambridge Local Plan Review – Issues Report June 2001

- The Issues Report identifies some of the main challenges to be addressed in the emerging Local Plan including the need to ensure the continued success of the City Centre as a retail destination.
- The Council considers that there may be additional retail opportunities associated with mixed-use schemes combining leisure and recreational development to add to the attraction of the City Centre if land were to become available.

Summary

As a matter of principle redevelopment of Bradwell's Court for mixed use purposes is entirely consistent with national, regional and local planning policy objectives.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

❑ Prudential Building

Although it may be preferable for a larger site including Prudential Building to be redeveloped, it is recognised that Bradwell's Court can be developed separately, without prejudice to future redevelopment of Prudential Building.

❑ Christ's and Emmanuel Colleges

The development will, however, need to take into account and make appropriate provision for the servicing needs of both Christ's and Emmanuel College.

❑ Drummer Street Bus Station

Options for the possible redevelopment of the bus station are currently being considered but it is recognised that redevelopment of Bradwell's Court can proceed separately without prejudice to future development proposals for the bus station.

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

A framework embracing sound urban design principles for the development site has been agreed for such matters as built form, scale and massing, street frontages and building lines, roofscape, elevational treatment and materials, and hard and soft landscaping and surfaces.

❑ Built Form - General Principles

Important principles for the site are:

- active frontages to St Andrew's Street, Christ's Lane and Christ's Pieces;
- local distinctiveness, landmarks, long and short views and vistas for legibility;
- reopening of Christ's Lane of appropriate width to ensure good pedestrian linkage and permeability;
- interesting rooflines and building corners for variety and visual focal points;
- architectural detail and design of contemporary style and human scale;
- rooftop equipment or plant should be enclosed or designed as a positive feature.

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❑ Built Form - St Andrew's Street

There is scope for the redevelopment of Bradwell's Court to allow a new building to return to the historic building line. (NB. this land is currently public highway.) This will require a building of the highest quality and also the successful relocation of the cycle parking and seating currently within this area. It also needs to relate sensitively to the height and features of Christ's College. This frontage needs to be detailed to acknowledge the narrow plot units and verticality of traditional buildings in the street.

The development must respect the height of the existing Prudential building along this frontage. Stepping of building heights would be welcomed, reflecting the variation on the opposite side of St Andrew's Street. The corner building abutting Christ's Lane will need to carefully take account of the height of Christ's College and rely on the quality of its line, setback, detailing and materials to act as a new visual focal point.

The development should respect the palette of materials in the wider surroundings with stone limited to detailing and limited use of colour to emphasise key features. Red brick should be avoided. Glazed and visually lightweight structures could be successfully used for upper storeys.

❑ Built Form - Christ's Lane

The building line will run largely parallel to Christ's College though some stepping back may be acceptable to create interest. It is vital that the lane is wide enough to cope with the likely pedestrian flows and feel comfortable in relation to building heights.

The entrance point to Christ's Lane on the east side has the potential to be a focal point along the main pedestrian route across Christ Pieces. The space created around the entrance could be enlarged to make a new square and used for sitting out in association with restaurant/leisure uses in this location.

Building heights along Christ's Lane will need to be designed to avoid Christ's Lane becoming canyon-like and oppressive, and to minimise the impact on the amenity of residents of Christ's College. A variety of building heights could be appropriate subject to more detailed design.

Whilst the prevailing materials should reflect those of the building's other facades the use of different materials and colours may help enliven the lane. Visually lightweight upper storeys are likely to be acceptable.

The inclusion of small kiosks along the lane may be acceptable to help screen the unattractive brick wall and add visual interest. Alternatively some redevelopment of parts of Christ's buildings on the northern side of Christ's Lane may be acceptable. In the event of student accommodation being provided for Christ's College a bridge link over Christ's Lane would be acceptable in principle.

❑ Built Form - Christ's Pieces

There is potential to create a new gateway public square at the interface of the development with the bus station and Christ's Pieces. To enclose this space and help give definition to the square there may be scope to extend the building line providing agreement can be reached with the various interested parties. (NB. Some of this land is currently public highway and some is owned by Jesus College who have a covenant restricting development.)

The ridge height of Emmanuel College North Court sets the general maximum for building heights along this frontage. Like North Court, however, the new building should have a varied skyline to add interest to views across the open space. The new building must respect both the general ridge height of Emmanuel College and the chimney stack on the Christ's College building on the north side of Christ's Lane.

The college buildings on either side of the new development are of stone and local gault brick. The new development needs to respect this character and the verticality of the traditional buildings. The interplay of solids and voids and the window patterns, particularly on North Court, gives the cue for the use of glazed elements in an imaginative way. The roof form is likely to be more visible on this façade. In the locality, clay tiles and welsh slate predominate and such materials or sheet metal roof with the colour and patina of slate are likely to be acceptable.

If, in the future, Drummer Street bus station is relocated or its service level reduced it is expected that the area it currently occupies will revert to being open space. This would promote an aspiration to enhance the setting of North Court.

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❑ Landscape Principles

A number of key principles for hard and soft landscaping are an essential part of overall scheme design.

These include:

- provision of a new public square
- hard landscape – surface treatment of a new street
- trees and soft landscaping

Public Square

A new square is proposed at the interface of Christ's Lane (reopened), Christ's Pieces and Drummer Street bus station. This area is a key gateway often providing the first impression of Cambridge for visitors alighting at the bus station. An active space linked to A3 uses is proposed with areas for sitting out and relaxation, to create an active and welcoming point of arrival.

Hard Landscaping

Detailed design of the square and surface treatment and materials will ensure continuity with Christ's Lane, reopened as a new, pedestrian only, paved thorough fare, with potential for public art, subject to detailed design.

❑ Trees

The existing grouping of London Planes on St Andrew's Street are to be removed, and although an important feature at present, they are expected to be in poor condition within 25 years. There are no other significant trees within the boundaries of the site. There are, however, mature trees in the immediate vicinity both on Christ's Pieces and along Emmanuel Road. Measures should be taken to preserve the setting of these trees with complementary soft landscaping where appropriate.

Where trees are planned to be retained or new trees planted the design of engineering and underground services will need to take account of the branch, trunk and root structures. The criteria set out in British Standard 5837 would be applied.

❑ Other Requirements

- **Pedestrian Routes** - The new pedestrian route should follow the historic Christ Lane and be a minimum width of 6 metres. Bollards or other features will be required to prevent its use by vehicles.
- The new route along Christ's Lane should be built to a standard to allow it to be adopted and maintained as Public Highway. The surfacing should be in natural stone.

The lane should be adequately lit in accordance with the approved Lighting Strategy and be included within the coverage of the CCTV system.

All accesses to shops and residential properties must provide good access for those with mobility problems.

Cycle Routes - Cycling will not be permitted along Christ's Lane.

- **Cycle Parking** - A minimum requirement is for secure provision to be made for cycle parking for workers in the development and for the residential units in line with the Council's standards. If the existing cycle parking along St Andrew's Street is to be removed at least an equivalent number of spaces must be included in the provision elsewhere on the site or in the immediate vicinity and at no cost to the County or City Councils and in a location that does not hamper the operation of the bus station.
Cycle parking will not be acceptable along Christ's Lane.
- **Bins** - Adequate space (including the basement) must be made available for the adequate storage of domestic and trade waste, including recycling.

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□ Applications

□ Legal Agreements

To be discussed and agreed