



INFORMATION PACK

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Question 7)

Cambridge's Planning Safeguards

Why are residents doing the Council's scrutiny?

The Christ's College library is a documented test of Cambridge's planning safeguards. Those safeguards have repeatedly failed.

FOUR ERRORS. CONSENT TO QUASH.

Four serious errors reached the Planning Committee. Residents brought a judicial review. The Council and Christ's College conceded all four grounds. They consented to quash the permission; the Council agreed to pay residents' legal costs. The High Court gives its reasoned judgment on 20 October.

APPLICATION RE-RUN. ERRORS RECUR AND GROW.

On the first application, the Planning Committee was never told that Historic England had warned of harm from the building's excessive bulk and massing. On the identical re-run, the Council failed to consult Historic England at all. Again, residents discovered the omission and pressed the Council to correct it.

FOUR ERRORS. ANSWER REFUSED.

Residents asked the Council to confirm that its new officer report would address every conceded ground and explain how each error had been corrected. The Council said it was "*not obliged to respond.*"

PUBLIC SCRUTINY CANCELLED.

Seventy-five residents met every published requirement for a Development Control Forum. Christ's College refused to attend. The

Council treated that refusal as a veto and cancelled the Forum, although no such veto appears in its rules. Residents were forced to issue a formal legal challenge. The Council reinstated the Forum.

The pattern is systemic: the Council's safeguards fail. Residents identify the failures. Residents force their correction.

The questions

- 1. Did any Council safeguard identify the failures in officer advice, consultation or public participation before residents did? If yes, which safeguard identified which failure, and when?**
- 2. Did the Council change any planning safeguard after four errors reached the Planning Committee? If yes, what changed and when? If no, was the identical application re-run without any safeguard being changed?**
- 3. How many other planning decisions has the Council audited for similar undetected errors? If none, does the Council have any other evidence that these failures are confined to the Christ's College applications?**

Cambridge City Council Meeting, Thursday 16th July 2026 6pm

Qn. 7: Supplementary Question

Our written question sets out the continuing pattern.

So we turn to the one safeguard that cannot fail: the High Court.

The Council has already consented to the quashing of the first permission for the Christ's College library.

What it is deciding now is a second application, for the same library, and in the applicant's own words, unchanged.

On 20 October, the High Court will provide a reasoned judgment.

That is barely a few weeks after this application is due to be determined, in September.

The Court's judgment will set out *exactly* what went wrong, and *exactly* what must be put right.

The Council *can* extend its determination deadline by simple written agreement.

So our question is this: will the Council ask the applicant to agree an extension until after the Court has ruled?

And if not, which safeguard is the Council relying on instead?