Exhibit H2: pages from Historic England's disclosure under reference 26/04173 relied on in CLAG's alternatives, justification and public benefits paper

Christ's Lane Action Group. Application 26/02109/FUL. Exhibit to CLAG's alternatives, justification and public benefits paper (23 September 2026).

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Item	What it is	Source and page	Exhibit page
H2.1	Caroe Architecture, Initial/Exploratory Views Commentary, draft for pre-application consultation, December 2024: the height increased against the consented scheme	released file 241213_CCC Inital Views Commentary draft v2 .pdf	2
H2.2	The same commentary: a great improvement over the previous, though of greater volume	released file 241213_CCC Inital Views Commentary draft v2 .pdf	3
H2.3	The same commentary: the omission of the basement adds to the volume of the project	released file 241213_CCC Inital Views Commentary draft v2 .pdf	4
H2.4	Grafton Architects, second pre-application presentation, 18 December 2024: the scale and size, the basement reasons, and the Bath Court enclosure considered and rejected	released file PRE APP 2_ Final Presentation 241218_ Low Res.pdf	5

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2. Commentary & Next Steps

2.1. Initial Exploratory Commentary

The views depict the emerging proposals in comparison with both the current conditions and the consented Mather Planning scheme. The views illustrate a variety of different viewpoints from which the proposals may be visible. They have been chosen as they are representative of a variety of different visual receptors or viewpoints that are illustrative of a type of visual effect. Together, these views indicate how the emerging scheme would respond to the existing townscape character.

From the surrounding public realm, the proposals would be most appreciable along Christ's Lane, and more peripherally visible from St Andrew's Street and Christ's Pieces (see views 1-5).

Considering evaluation baseline

One of the primary strategic aims of this new scheme over the 2016 consent is to deliver the brief without a new substantial basement. There are some very important benefits to this approach, not least reduced archaeological impacts; much reduced structural risk to existing historic buildings adjacent and, especially, a markedly reduced embodied carbon budget. Secondary benefits will be reduced construction impacts and duration.

The approved scheme of 2016 will be appraised as a notional 'baseline', against which this new project can be compared, also with reference to current context.

Initial discussion of townscape evaluation matters.

Whilst overall height in the new design is increased when compared to the Mather consented scheme of 2016, the emerging scheme is being developed to respond positively and innovatively to its townscape context, in a way that is more congruent with context, generous, interesting and responsive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The emerging proposals maintain the established building line to Christ's Lane which, coupled with the proposed architectural expression of the ground floor and its reference to surrounding built forms, maintains the urban qualities of this public route at the human scale. The reinstatement of Christ's Lane, following the removal of the Bradwells Court shopping arcade, transformed this facade of the college and created the opportunity for the Panter-Hudspith-designed mixed use development to make a new interesting rhythmic facade to the South of the re-discovered Christ's Lane. The previous scheme did not fully respond to this architectural opportunity.

At this pre-application stage, is there agreement that there is scope for the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area to be enhanced within the architectural context, including the Panter Hudspith design opposite?

Characterisation of the emerging building form, massing and facade.

In the newly proposed design by Grafton, the depth, reveals and 'layering' of the emerging facade at a higher level adds visual interest, in contrast with the lower facade. This facade proposal reflects the appearance of the strata of collegiate built form often found in Cambridge's back streets- consider Trinity Lane as a precedent and exemplar.

This design approach also ensures the proposals avoid a monolithic presence in the view and break down the massing with rhythmic architectural elements and verticality. The initial view diagrams from modelling also reveal how the proposals draw upon townscape elements common to the urban fabric of Cambridge, such as chimneys, to regulate the facade and provide further interest and character.

These elements are intended to create a varied facade, reflective of the existing secondary character of Christ's Lane and similar streets, within a framing of new vertical rhythmic elements. The composition works at a number of levels and is intended to be read in oblique views. As appreciable in the views, the scheme also retains the legible distinction between historic and new built form.

When it comes to making an assessment of the new proposal, we propose that the Conservation Area context and baseline now needs to be defined and acknowledged in relation to the current appearance and form of the modern building opposite. This modern structure does in our initial view positively contribute to the CA. We suggest that the character and appearance of the CA is (in part) defined by the modern mixed use scheme in the immediate context. The initial views commentary starts to note other matters of relevant to townscape and setting.

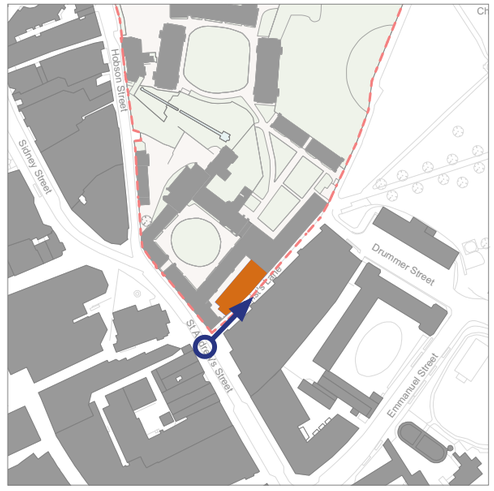
Annotations on VuCity imagery.

We have simply added some concise annotations on the following pages to explore what the townscape issues are and to open a discussion about 'what matters'. These annotations are exploratory and informal, for discussion.

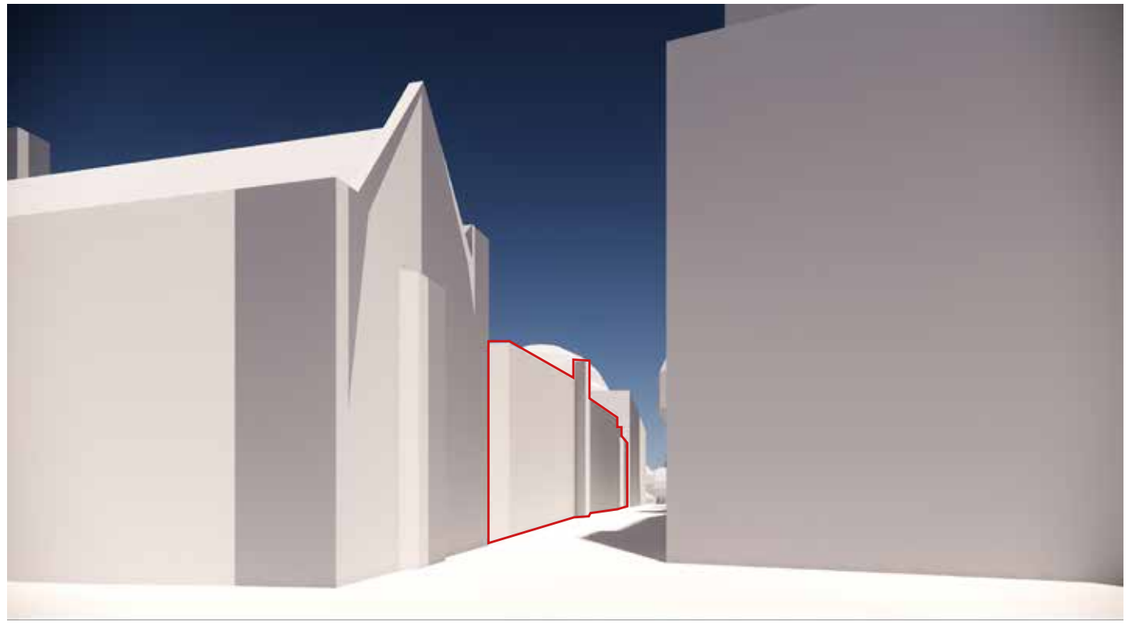
Vu City View 02

The character and appearance of the existing context in this view will be carefully described, as this is the vantage point which will most change. Hence we will (re)define the contribution of the modern development in the baseline review. In the foreground is the Grade 1 listed frontage, which is a key definer of townscape and the heritage context. Behind this, the modern existing library is arguably detracting- especially the poor quality unbroken boundary structure at lower level.

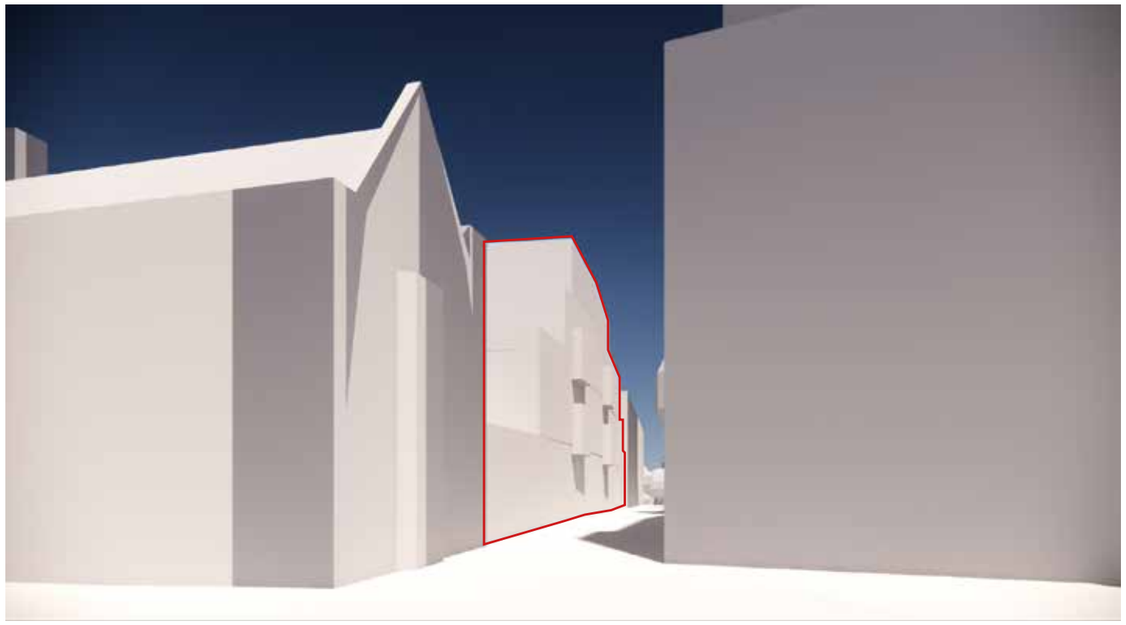
It will be the relationship between the new structure and the listed frontage that will need most careful consideration in our forthcoming evaluation. The 2016 approval will be considered within the baseline context. The new architectural proposal is a great improvement over the previous, though of greater volume.



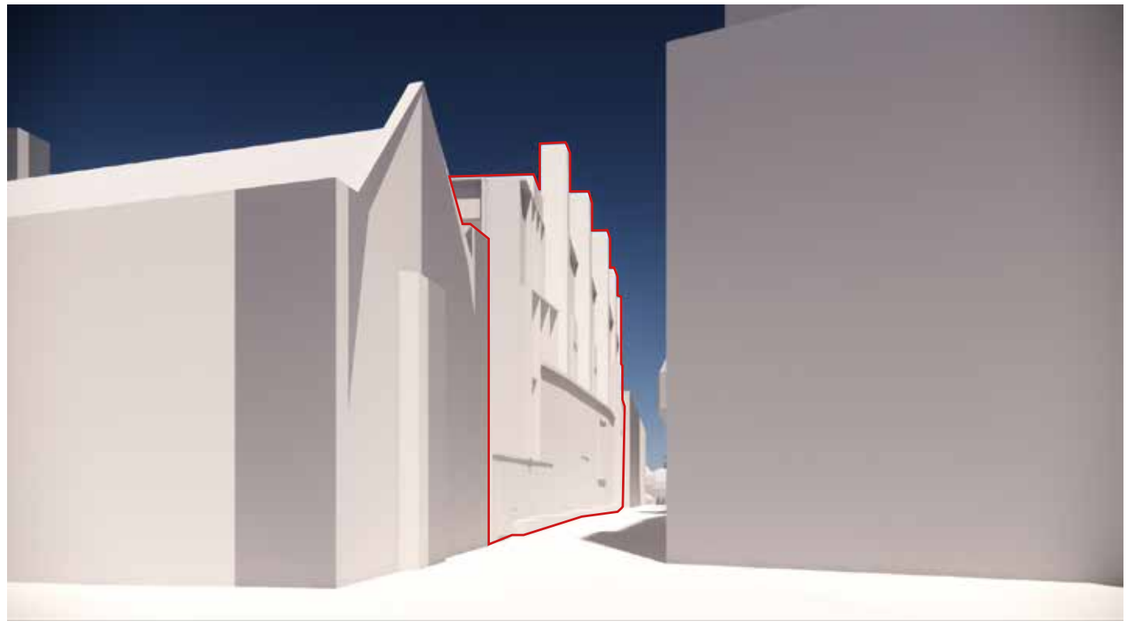
View Location Plan



Existing



Mather Planning



Emerging Grafton Proposal

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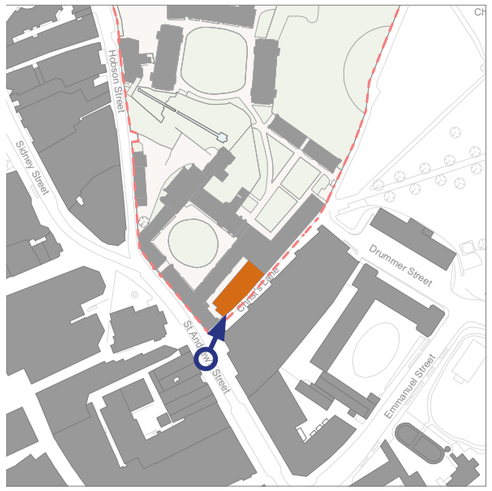
Vu City View 07

The initial discussion points above in relation to view 02 apply here also.

To develop the discussion here, as noted earlier, the overall evaluation will articulate the strategic moves for this project- especially the omission of the basement- to be evaluated by way of introduction. This design markedly reduces harms and risks below ground, but as a consequence adds to the volume of the project, which thus changes the effects and experience of the proposal in this oblique view. These relative merits are to addressed in the project assessment.



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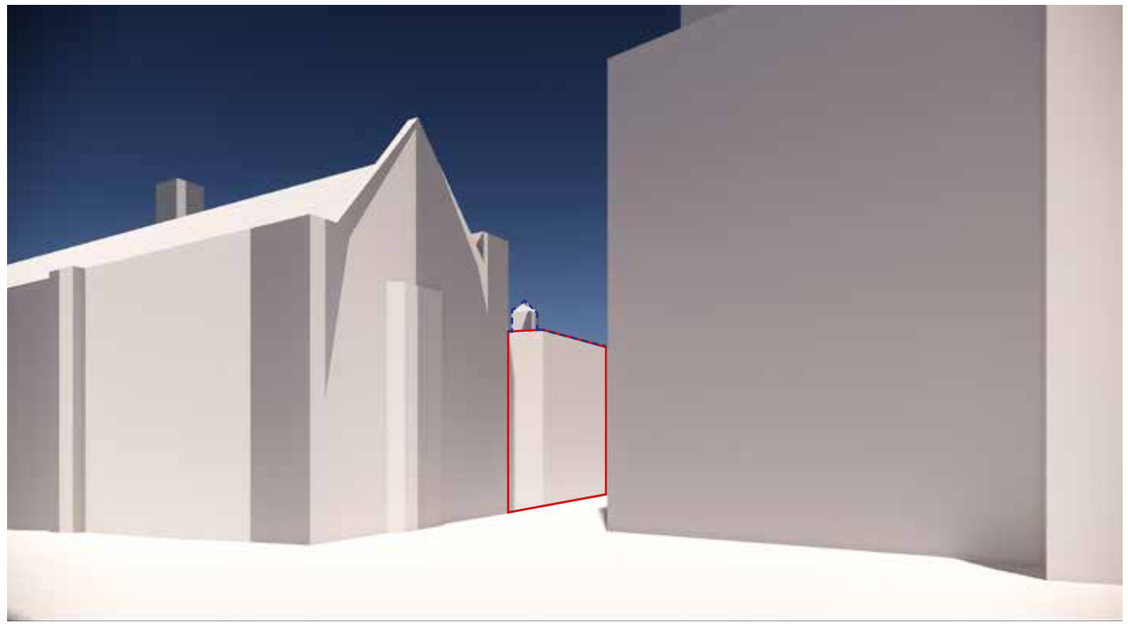

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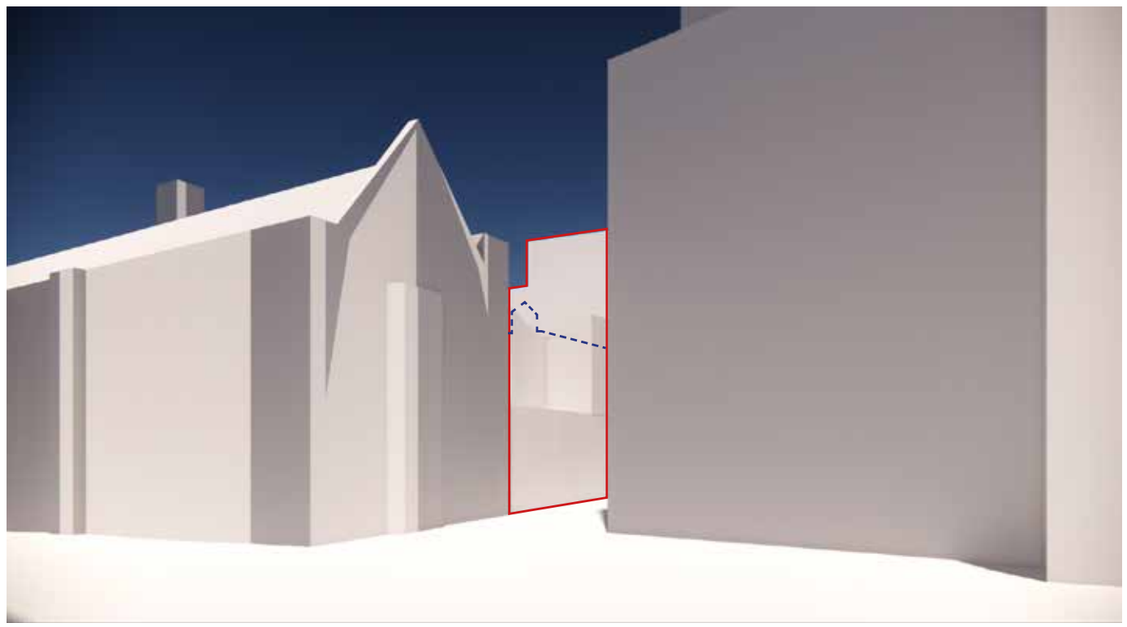
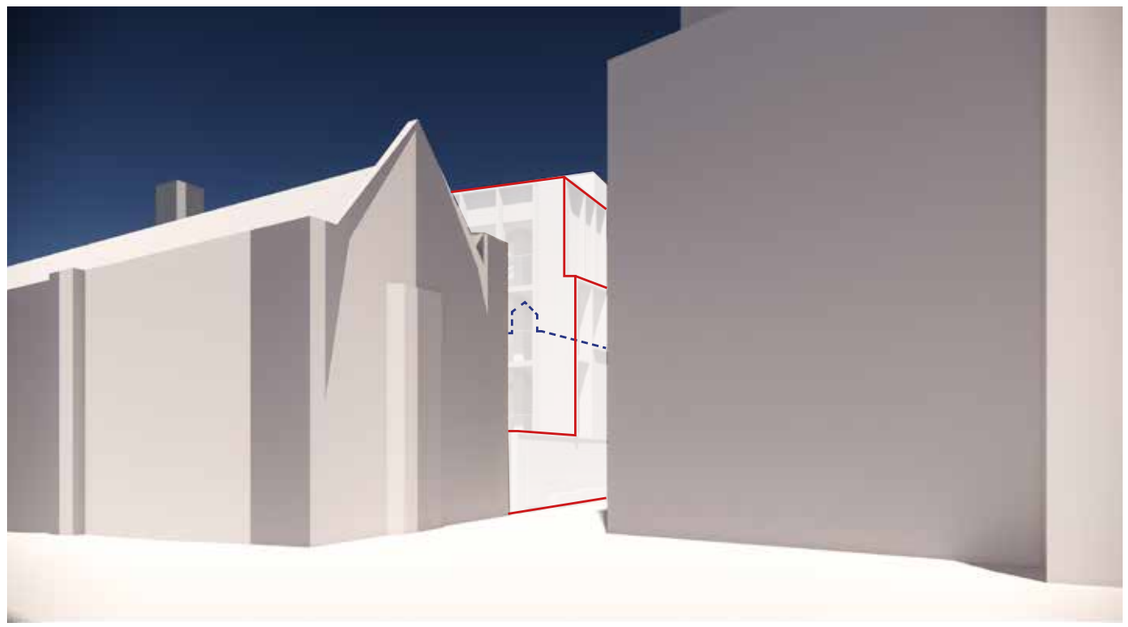


Mather Planning



Emerging Grafton Proposal

COMPARISON DRAWINGS OF THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SCHEME WITH THE CURRENT SCHEME

The proposals for the new library are overlaid on the original plans for comparative purposes.

What these drawings reveal about the new proposal:

Scale and Size

The new library is larger than the original planning scheme as there is no longer a substantial basement. This basement area has been allocated across the upper levels of the new library and explains why it is somewhat longer than the original 2016 proposals.

Removing the Basement

The rationale for eliminating the basement is based on the wish to avoid interfering with the existing below ground conditions where possible, and the potential need to underpin or protect the delicate foundations of the historic structures addressing Bath Court.

Apart from economic reasons and the inefficiencies in the construction of a small basement area, on the grounds of sustainability alone, basements require significant amounts of concrete and waterproofing which attract disproportionate quantities of embodied carbon. The university has very ambitious targets for embodied carbon in its new buildings and the material construction of the new library is aiming to meet this target.

Avoiding the glazing in of Bath Court

The new library stands as an independent structure. Unlike the previous proposals there are no plans to glaze over Bath Court as part of the new library. As part of the initial design proposition, we considered closing in Bath Court, however we were concerned about the complexity of joining to the historic structures in a way which would be refined and sympathetic.

We were also concerned about the impact on the quality of the interior rooms at Ground and First Floor, particularly the Darwin room.

The new library shape and mass absorbs the quantum of circulation space attributed to these glazed areas accommodating it withing an extended form, separate and independent of the historic structures.

The connection at First Floor to the Bodley library is retained, located in much in the same place as the existing bridge. The current bridge will be replaced with a similar more environmentally stable structure.