

**From:** Morgan Ellis Leah <[southern@victoriansociety.org.uk](mailto:southern@victoriansociety.org.uk)>

**Sent:** 06 July 2026 16:25

**To:** Planning <[planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org)>

**Subject:** Re: 25/02161/FUL, Christ's College, St Andrew's Lane, Cambridge

Please find attached an updated letter regarding the above application.

To Whom it May Concern,

Our sincerest apologies for the late response to this application. We have been inundated with applications in the last two weeks; we hope that these comments may still be considered.

As per our objection and advice submitted on 22 August 2025 (25/02161/FUL), we outlined the additional harm associated with the College's newly submitted scheme. This harm was attributed to the massing and scale of the proposed development compared with the previously submitted proposal, which maximised capacity by drilling down into the basement. This previous scheme still achieved the volume needed for the College's growing student body but mitigated visual harm to the Grade-I Listed heritage asset and, also the important Cambridge skyline.

We also addressed the harm to the setting of the Grade-I Listed College, though key design principles at play in the new library were evident; this was especially the case with the ill-proportioned massing and the lack of design refinement, both of which impacted the human scale when compared to the neighbouring Bodley Library. Our Southern Building's Committee - a collective of architectural, planning and heritage professionals - offered easily implemented recommendations for the design that might help mitigate some of this harm. Advice ignored.

Christ's College has now submitted a second application - understood to be the same scheme as 25/02161/FUL. In the newly submitted Covering Statement, the applicant argues that the scheme causes no relevant heritage harm. The design, as it stands does offer a low-to-moderate level of less-than-substantial harm.

The College's historic buildings (surrounding the First Court) are Grade-I listed, and the college grounds are designated as a Historic Park and Garden; the proposal has a direct bearing on the College's most significant assets. Indeed, the proposed not only directly impacts the fabric of the College's Grade-I Listing, but also the setting of the Cambridge Central (Historic Core) Conservation Area. By virtue of the building's prominent location on Christ's Lane and its view of St Andrew's Street, it is a public-facing building that will need to be balanced against public benefit.

Heritage harm has been identified, and the College has a duty to consider less harmful alternatives. As a result, we request that the council review our advice from August 2025. In particular, we urge the committee to reconsider the minor alterations we previously proposed. These changes, whilst few in number, could offer significant scope for improvement and would do so without major impact on the College's finances or the College's stipulated capacity.

We ultimately wish to encourage the applicant to continue the conversation about the design of the Library, which does set an important precedent to such a historic city.

Very Best Wishes,  
Morgan



**The  
Victorian  
Society**

**Campaigning for  
Victorian & Edwardian  
Built Heritage**

**Morgan Ellis Leah**  
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**From:** Morgan Ellis Leah <[southern@victoriansociety.org.uk](mailto:southern@victoriansociety.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 06 July 2026 10:43  
**To:** [Planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:Planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org) <[Planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:Planning@greatercambridgeplanning.org)>  
**Subject:** 25/02161/FUL, Christ's College, St Andrew's Lane, Cambridge

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As per our objection and advice submitted on 22 August 2025 (25/02161/FUL), we outlined the additional harm associated with the College's newly submitted scheme. This harm was attributed to the massing and scale of the proposed development compared with the previously submitted proposal, which maximised capacity by drilling down into the basement. This previous scheme still achieved the volume needed for the College's growing student body but mitigated visual harm to the Grade-I Listed heritage asset and, also the important Cambridge skyline.

We also addressed the harm to the setting of the Grade-I Listed College, though key design principles at play in the new library were evident; this was especially the case with the ill-proportioned massing and the lack of design refinement, both of which impacted the human scale when compared to the neighbouring Bodley Library. Our Southern Building's Committee - a collective of architectural, planning and heritage professionals - offered easily implemented recommendations for the design that might help mitigate some of this harm. Advice ignored.

Christ's College has now submitted a second application - understood to be the same scheme as 25/02161/FUL. This application has blatantly changed the level of harm attributed to this design. In the newly submitted Covering Statement, the applicant argues that the scheme causes no relevant heritage harm. This is simply not the case, as we have previously demonstrated. This low-to-moderate level of less-than-substantial harm was also previously identified by the Conservation Officer and the officer for Historic England at Pre-App. To further insist that this scheme will produce a "minor beneficial impact" overall is both unjustified and contrary to the applicant's own previous assessment. It goes without saying that the same submitted scheme cannot improve its level of harm.

The College's historic buildings (surrounding the First Court) are Grade-I listed, and the college grounds are designated as a Historic Park and Garden; the proposal has a direct bearing on the College's most significant assets. Indeed, the proposed not only directly impacts the fabric of the College's Grade-I Listing, but also the setting of the Cambridge Central (Historic Core) Conservation Area. To ignore all of this to cite a "minor beneficial impact" and to assert that sections 66 and 72 operate positively, so that no public-benefits balance is required, is incorrect. By virtue of the building's prominent location on Christ's Lane and its view of St Andrew's Street, it is a public-facing building that will need to be balanced against public benefit.

Heritage harm has been identified, and the College has a duty to consider less harmful alternatives. As a result, we request that the council review our advice from August 2025. In particular, we urge the committee to reconsider the minor alterations we previously proposed. These changes, whilst few in number, could offer significant scope for improvement and would do so without major impact on the College's finances or the College's stipulated capacity.

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