

The College held an open meeting. Every resident and every city councillor, including the planning committee, was cordially invited, and the College has cited it ever since as proof of how thoroughly it consults. Residents wrote up what was said and asked for it to go on the public planning file. Yesterday the College's lawyers said the Council could not publish it. Almost immediately, the Council agreed. The reason, in writing: "the college objects to its inclusion."

The lawyers' stated worry is that the record "may be afforded evidential weight in the determination of the application". In plain English: someone might read it. We had always assumed that was the point of a public file?

No matter. If the Council cannot accept our record, it can have our objection instead. We have resubmitted everything we saw and heard as CLAG's own account of the meeting, in our own name, and objections go on the file as a matter of course. The College is warmly welcome to file its own account alongside ours. It cannot, we think, object to an objection.

WE CANNOT IMAGINE WHY THE COLLEGE VETO

Open meetings are open to the public; that is the point of them. The record of what was said, the College now tells us, is apparently not. See for yourself what the College could possibly not want you to see: christslaneactiongroup.org. A few passages, chosen entirely at random:

Asked whether minutes were kept of the governing body's decision to drop the twice-approved Mather design:
"The college keeps its own records."
(Quite. See above.)

A resident asked why the College would not simply wait for the judgment on the case; it conceded:
"I am now going to talk over you deliberately."

"The judicial review is not against Christ's College." The floor, helpfully:
"If it's not against you, why did you sign it? We have your signature."

On how committee members were to learn Historic England's eight concerns from a summary of "no objection":
"We got English scholars in here. I think that is clear."

On the Victorian Society, which found harm to the setting of the Bodley Library:
"one of the 22" consultees, and not "custodians of a building from the Tudor era."
(The Bodley is Victorian. Hence the Society.)

The College's version ran nationally and had to be corrected against the court record. The residents' version cannot get onto a council planning portal.

FIVE DAYS: OBJECT BY WEDNESDAY 22 JULY

Three lines in your own words: who you are, that the scheme is unchanged, and that no decision should be taken before the High Court gives judgment on 20 October. Object at Cambridge Planning, quoting 26/02109/FUL.

Christ's Lane Action Group