

Toby Williams

From: Toby Williams
Sent: 08 July 2026 14:10
To: Christ's Lane Action Group
Cc: James Goddard; Matthew Hussey; Dominic Bush
Subject: FW: Request for DCF: Christ's College Library, 26/02109/FUL
Attachments: CLAG_DCF_Petition_of_Objection_26-02109-FUL_2026-07-01.pdf

Dear CLAG

I refer to the attached Petition of Objection request for a Development Control Forum (DCF) for application 26/02109/FUL received on 1 July 2026.

The applicant, Christ's College, has declined to participate. The reasons for this are set out in their e-mail below.

Accordingly, your request for the Council to hold a DCF is declined.

Regards

Toby Williams | Development Manager (East Team)

Pronouns He / Him - please feel free to tell me your pronoun



Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

South Cambridgeshire Hall | Cambourne Business Park | Cambourne | Cambridge | CB23 6EA

The Guildhall | Market Square | Cambridge | CB2 3QJ

e: toby.williams@greatercambridgeplanning.org | m : 07704 072593

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My working days are Mon - Thurs

From: Michael Parsons <mjp10@christs.cam.ac.uk>

Sent: 08 July 2026 08:03

To: Toby Williams <Toby.Williams@greatercambridgeplanning.org>

Cc: Jon Burgess <jon.burgess@turley.co.uk>; James Goddard <JamesH.Goddard@cambridge.gov.uk>; Matthew Hussey <Matthew.Hussey@cambridge.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Request for DCF: Christ's College Library, 26/02109/FUL

Dear Toby

The College has considered the request carefully, but is not willing to participate in another DCF in relation to this project, given that the details of the College's initial and second application are unchanged (save the exclusion of the LBC elements which were not subject to the Judicial Review).

In the course of the initial and second application for this project, the College has supported:

- A Design Review Panel (13 February 2025)
- A drop-in consultation session for local residents (18 March 2025)
- A Councillor site visit (13 May 2025)
- A Councillor briefing (on-line) – which the public were able to join as observers (19 May 2025)
- A DCF [Development Control Forum] (11 Sept 2025)
- A Planning Committee site visit (27 October 2025)
- And most recently an Open Meeting (6 July 2026)

The issues raised by CLAG in this latest petition are substantively the same issues that were extensively aired at the previous DCF. A re-run of that meeting will not generate any new information. I would hope that the Council could make available minutes of that meeting for anyone not present.

Regards
Michael

Michael Parsons | Bursar
Christ's College | Room Z36
07540 531634 | mjp10@cam.ac.uk

From: Toby Williams <Toby.Williams@greatercambridgeplanning.org>
Sent: 07 July 2026 14:41
To: Michael Parsons <mjp10@christs.cam.ac.uk>
Cc: Jon Burgess <jon.burgess@turley.co.uk>; James Goddard <JamesH.Goddard@cambridge.gov.uk>;
Matthew Hussey <Matthew.Hussey@cambridge.gov.uk>
Subject: Request for DCF: Christ's College Library, 26/02109/FUL

Michael

Please find attached a petition request from CLAG for a Development Control Forum in relation to the above application.

I would be grateful if the College would indicate whether it wishes to participate.

Regards

Toby Williams | Development Manager (East Team)

Pronouns He / Him - please feel free to tell me your pronoun



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To: Cambridge City Council
For the attention of Democratic Services

PETITION FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

This is a petition asking Cambridge City Council to hold a Development Control Forum (DCF) in relation to the following planning application:

Application No: 26/02109/FUL

Site Address: Christ's College Library, Christ's College, St Andrew's Street, Cambridge CB2 3BU

Proposal: Demolition of the 1970s library and replacement with a new library, social and study spaces, including re-provision of the bridge to the Bodley Library; alterations to the kitchen, Upper Hall and adjacent areas including new plant, access improvements and alterations to WC provision in the south-east range of Second Court; re-landscaping of Bath Court and ancillary works; and installation of a temporary kitchen and dining facility in Second Court for the duration of the works.

Lead Petitioner: Christ's Lane Action Group

The grounds for asking for a Forum on this application are as follows:

The Christ's Lane Action Group supports the provision of a new library for Christ's College. We do not object in principle to a new library. We object to this particular scheme. Application 26/02109/FUL is the same physical building as the previous application (25/02161/FUL). Rather than defend the judicial review of that permission, the Council and the College signed a Consent Order on 28 April 2026 agreeing that it should be quashed on all four grounds and that the Action Group's costs should be paid; the Court has not yet made a final quashing order, and the substantive hearing remains listed for 20 October 2026. The resubmission reproduces the same reasoning, and now goes further, recharacterising as a "minor beneficial impact" the very bulk and massing that the heritage consultees had identified as harmful. A Development Control Forum is needed so that residents, retailers, the College and the Council can discuss how a new library can be delivered without that harm.

1. Historic England, the Victorian Society and the independent heritage consultant Alec Forshaw each assessed this scheme and found harm, and none of them has withdrawn that advice. Historic England (29 July 2025) found the building "too big, overdominant" and confirmed on 1 September 2025 that "the overall massing of the building remains unchanged"; the Victorian Society (August 2025) suggested reducing the height by approximately half at each floor to improve the overall scale of the current proposals; and Alec Forshaw (October 2025) found less-than-substantial harm "at the upper end of the scale" to the setting of the Grade I listed Bodley Library. These and other heritage consultees, including the statutory consultee, the Gardens Trust, have not had the opportunity to respond to the resubmission's new claim of a "minor beneficial impact".
2. The scheme creates a canyon effect on Christ's Lane. It places a sheer wall of approximately 14 metres on the north side of a lane only approximately 6 metres wide, an

enclosure ratio of roughly 2.3:1, far exceeding historic streets such as Trinity Street and Rose Crescent (approximately 1.5:1). The height further exceeds the 11.4-metre height limit set for this lane in the 2002 Joint Planning Brief by around 3 metres. Christ's Lane is a designated principal pedestrian route (Local Plan Policy 10) carrying over 10,000 people a day, and the scheme would turn it into a dark, oppressive corridor.

3. The loss of daylight is severe and has not been properly assessed. The applicant's own evidence shows Vertical Sky Component losses exceeding 50% at 25 windows along Christ's Lane and over 90% at four, with the café windows directly opposite reduced by between 55% and 96%. No BRE 209 (2022)-compliant daylight, sunlight and shadow-plotting assessment has been provided for the lane as a public space, and no Construction Management Plan has been submitted for a route with this footfall.
4. The scheme offers minimal genuine public benefit or active frontage. Against the harm identified by the heritage consultees, it offers only a single bench and a "book-stop". Benefits offered by previous Christ's College library schemes never materialised, including the previously promised green wall. The building presents a blank, inactive wall to Christ's Lane where the lane requires active frontage.
5. The building qualifies as a Tall Building: it breaks the existing skyline and is significantly taller than the Bodley Library and First Court, yet no Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been provided against the specific criteria of Policy 60 of the Cambridge Local Plan. The scheme also conflicts with Local Plan Policies 10, 56, 58 and 61 and with NPPF paragraphs 212–215, none of which can be satisfied while the harm found by the heritage consultees is simply denied.
6. Credible less harmful alternatives were before the Council and remain unaddressed. The 2016 basemented Rick Mather scheme was not found harmful by Historic England, and the Victorian Society expressly contrasted it with the current scheme; the 2016 design would not be harmful, whereas the current one has the potential to be. The Victorian Society also recommended aligning floor heights with the Bodley Library's oriel window, roughly halving each floor height. Create Streets further illustrated a basemented lower-impact route (October 2025). The failure to engage with these options, one of the grounds conceded in the judicial review, returns unchanged.

Do you think there are changes that could be made to overcome your concerns?

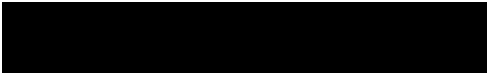
Yes. The Christ's Lane Action Group is not objecting in principle to a new library. The following changes would overcome our concerns:

1. Reduce the height, mass and scale of the building so that it no longer harms the setting of the Grade I listed buildings or the character of Christ's Lane, for example by aligning floor heights with the Bodley Library's oriel window as the Victorian Society recommended, and by revisiting a basemented, lower-rise approach along the lines of the 2016 scheme.
2. Introduce genuine active frontage and public benefit onto Christ's Lane, satisfying Local Plan policy on this principal pedestrian route, rather than presenting a blank wall.

3. Provide the missing evidence and consult on it properly: a BRE 209 (2022)-compliant daylight, sunlight and shadow-plotting assessment for Christ's Lane as a public space, and a Construction Management Plan for the construction period.
4. Bring the ventilation stacks down to a height subservient to the college's historic buildings, and demonstrate a comparison between alternative ways of realising passive ventilation.
5. Undertake and publish a genuine assessment of less harmful alternatives, including the 2016 Rick Mather scheme, together with a proper Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal against Policy 60.

Lead Petitioner

Christ's Lane Action Group



Email: residents@christs-lane.com

Signatories

The following 75 signatories support this request for a Development Control Forum.

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