

# Girton Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs. Yvonne Murray  
Telephone (01223) 618619  
Email: Clerk@girton-pc.gov.uk  
Website: <https://www.girton-cambs.org.uk>

The Pavilion  
Girton Recreation Ground  
Cambridge Road, Girton  
Cambridge, CB3 0FH

**NOTICE of MEETING:** GIRTON PARISH COUNCIL  
**MEETING** PLANNING COMMITTEE  
**DATE & TIME:** 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 6.30pm  
**VENUE:** Girton Recreation Ground Pavilion

All Members of the Planning Committee are hereby summoned to attend for the purposes of resolving Council. Business to be transacted at the meeting, as set out below. Members of the public and press are invited to address the Council under the Public Participation item. Advance notice of questions and/or issues, would be appreciated.

**Members:** 13 + 2 Ex-Officio      **Vacancies:** 5      **Quorum:** 5

**Members:** Cllr Carney (Chair), Cllr Clare (Vice-Chair), Cllr Betts, Cllr Blom, Cllr Giles, Cllr Hayat, Cllr Marshall, Cllr Muston, Cllr Williams, Cllr Wright,

**Note:** A full copy of this agenda with appendices and reports may be found on the Parish website shown above or requested from the Clerk by email. Notices and information for members of the public can be found on page 3 of this Agenda.

Mrs. Yvonne Murray – Clerk to Girton Parish Council  
23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022

## AGENDA

| Agenda Item | Item Description  | Action/Power |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| 22/134      | Welcome from Committee Chair  |              |
| 22/135      | To Receive Apologies and Reasons for Absence  | For Decision |
| 22/136      | To Receive Members' Declarations of Interest and to note Dispensations  |              |
| 22/137      | To Co-opt Councillor Linton for Committee   | For Decision |
| 22/138      | <b>Public Participation</b><br><i>To allow a total of 15 minutes for any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to any matter on the agenda. Individual presentations to be limited to 3 minutes on any single issue.</i> | 15 Mins      |
| 22/139      | To Approve minutes of Planning Committee of 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2022  | For Decision |
| 22/140      | Matters arising from Previous Meetings ( <i>for information only</i> )  |              |

| Agenda Item | Item Description   | Action/ Power       |
|-------------|--|---------------------|
| 22/141      | <b>Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council</b>  | <b>For Decision</b> |
| 22/141.1    | <a href="#">Area Fronting College Holt Huntingdon Road Girton Cambridgeshire CB3 0LH</a><br>5 Day Notice, Scots Pine numbered T 971 on plan provided) - Fell (TPO 0025 (2003) G15   22/1467/TTPO   Validated 08 Dec 2022 | <b>For Decision</b> |
| 22/141.2    | <a href="#">Street Record St Margarets Road Girton Cambridgeshire</a><br>5 day notice, Norway Maple - remove 1 large snagged branch as per photos T275 TPO 0024 (2003)   22/05303/HFUL   Validated 07 Dec 2022           | <b>For Decision</b> |
| 22/141.3    | <a href="#">51 Thornton Close Girton Cambridgeshire CB3 0NF</a><br>Single storey front and side extensions; front facing dormer window to first floor   22/1470/TTPO   Validated 08 Dec 2022                             | <b>For Decision</b> |
| 22/142      | <b>To Receive Correspondence addressed to the Council</b>  |                     |
| 22/143      | <b>To Approve Communication of items from this Agenda</b>  | <b>For Decision</b> |
| 22/144      | <b>To Request items for next Agenda</b>  |                     |
| 22/145      | <b>Date of next meeting(s): To be Confirmed</b>  |                     |

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NOTICE of MEETING: GIRTON PARISH COUNCIL  
MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE  
DATE & TIME: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 at 6.30pm  
VENUE: Girton Recreation Ground Pavilion

Members: 13 + 2 Ex-Officio      Vacancies: 4      Quorum: 5

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## MINUTES

| Agenda Item  | Item Description   | Action/Power |
|--|--|--------------|
| <b>Meeting begins: 18:33</b>   |  |              |
| <b>Members:</b> Cllr Giles, Cllr Hayat, Cllr Marshall, Cllr Muston, Cllr Carney (Ex-Officio)<br><b>Present:</b> Yvonne Murray (Clerk)<br><b>Members of the Public:</b> One |  |              |
| 22/108   | <b>To elect Chair of the Planning Committee</b><br><br><i><b>Approval:</b> Proposed Cllr Muston. Seconded Cllr Giles. Unanimous approval.</i><br>Cllr Carney put himself forward as Chair.   | Approved     |
| 22/109   | <b>Welcome from Committee Chair</b><br>Cllr Carney thanked every one for attending the Planning Committee.   |              |
| 22/110   | <b>To Receive Apologies and Reasons for Absence</b><br>Cllr Blom, Cllr Clare (Vice-Chair), Cllr Betts, Cllr Williams, Cllr Wright,<br><br><i><b>Approval:</b> Committee accepted reasons for Apologies for Personal reasons.<br/>Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Marshall. Unanimous approval.</i> | Approved     |
| 22/111   | <b>To Receive Members' Declarations of Interest and to note Dispensations</b><br>Cllr Muston lives in Thornton Road. See 116.2<br>Cllr Carney lives on Cambridge Road. See 116.3, 116.5  |              |
| 22/112   | <b>To Co-opt Councillor Dashwood to Committee</b><br><br><i><b>Approval:</b> Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Marshall. Unanimous approval.</i><br>Deferred until Cllr Dashwood can attend.   | Deferred     |
| 22/113   | <b>Public Participation</b><br><i>Member of public did not wish to speak.</i>  |              |

| Agenda Item | Item Description  | Action/ Power       |
|-------------|---|---------------------|
| 22/114      | <p><b>To Approve Minutes of Girton Parish Council – Planning Committee: 9<sup>th</sup> November</b></p> <p><i><b>Approval:</b> Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Marshall. Unanimous approval.</i></p> <p>No further discussion.</p>  | <b>Approved</b>     |
| 22/115      | <p><b>Matters arising from Previous Meetings (for information only)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Muston asked if the ‘Ratification of decisions’ for Planning Committee held on September 26<sup>th</sup> were confirmed. GPC Clerk confirmed that once draft minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Full Council were approved then item 22/142.6 Clerk’s Report would confirm.</li> <li>• Cllr Carney asked if there were any Matters arising from Previous Meetings. GPC Clerk confirmed that she was working on information to be published on website to show progress of Planning Applications. These aimed to be published on Community Website before Dec 14<sup>th</sup>.</li> </ul>   |                     |
| 22/116      | <b>Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council</b>   | <b>For Decision</b> |
| 22/116.1    | <p><a href="#"><u>Submission of details required by condition 15 (Excavation Trenches) of planning permission S/2036/13/VC</u></a></p> <p>North West Cambridge Site Phase 1 Huntingdon Road Girton Cambridgeshire<br/>Ref. No: S/2036/13/COND15   Validated: Fri 21 Oct 2022   Status: Awaiting decision</p> <p><i><b>Approval:</b> Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Giles. Unanimous approval.</i></p> <p><b>Debate Highlights:</b></p> <p>Cllr Carney noted there will be removal of a semi-mature tree. Request a plan to replace the removed tree, under the 2 for 1 replacement.</p> <p>GPC Comments entered to GCP database 24/11/2022.</p>  | <b>Support</b>      |
| 22/116.2    | <p><a href="#"><u>Part single storey, part two storey rear extension, roof extension and garage alterations.</u></a></p> <p>74 Thornton Road Girton Cambridgeshire CB3 0NN<br/>Ref. No: 22/04566/HFUL   Validated: Mon 17 Oct 2022   Status: Awaiting decision</p> <p><i><b>Approval:</b> Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Marshall. 4 in Favour. 1 Abstention.</i><br/><i>Abstention: Cllr Muston lives in Thornton Road.</i></p> <p><b>Debate Highlights:</b></p> <p>Cllr Muston stated this application was in keeping with the rest of extensions in Thornton Road.</p> <p>Committee noted: Application gives<br/>Increased view of neighbouring property garden.<br/>There is a Velux winder rather than dormer window at the back of the property</p> <p>GPC Comments entered to GCP database 24/11/2022</p> | <b>Support</b>      |
| 22/116.3    | <p><a href="#"><u>Office studio with carport to the front.</u></a></p> <p>87 Cambridge Road Girton Cambridgeshire CB3 0PN<br/>Ref. No: 22/04829/FUL   Validated: Thu 03 Nov 2022   Status: Awaiting decision</p> <p><i><b>Approval:</b> Proposed Cllr Muston, Seconded Cllr Hayat. 4 in Favour. 1 Abstention.</i></p>   | <b>Support</b>      |

| Agenda Item | Item Description   | Action/ Power |
|-------------|--|---------------|
|             | <p><i>Abstention: Cllr Carney lives in Cambridge Road.</i></p> <p>GPC Comments entered to GCP database 24/11/2022.</p>   |               |
| 22/116.4    | <p><a href="#"><u>T1 Silver Birch - The tree is dying from old age and also as a result of recent drought conditions. Fell to ground level</u></a></p> <p>Westchester Huntingdon Road Girton Cambridgeshire CB3 0LG<br/>Ref. No: 22/1323/TTPO   Validated: Wed 09 Nov 2022   Status: Awaiting decision</p> <p><b><i>Object:</i></b> <i>Proposed Cllr Carney. Seconded Cllr Marshall. Unanimous approval</i></p> <p><b><u>Debate Highlights:</u></b><br/>There is a TPO in place for this tree.<br/>No evidence provided in Planning Application that the tree is dying.<br/>Planning Committee request that supporting information be supplied before approval is given.</p> <p>GPC Comments entered to GCP database 24/11/2022.<br/>Letter sent to GCP Case Officer on 24/11/2022 to request required information.</p>  | Object        |
| 22/116.5    | <p><a href="#"><u>T1 Robinia - remove 2 branches shown in photo and remove epicormic growth up to 6m. T2 Robinia - remove major deadwood and remove epicormic growth up to 6m. Reasons - To maintain trees and light into the garden and to achieve a more aesthetically pleasing look.</u></a></p> <p>86 Cambridge Road Girton Cambridgeshire CB3 0PJ<br/>Ref. No: 22/1342/TTPO   Validated: Mon 14 Nov 2022   Status: Awaiting decision</p> <p><b><i>Neutral:</i></b> <i>Proposed Cllr Marshall, Seconded Cllr Giles for discussion. 2 against. 3 Abstentions. Abstentions: Cllr Carney lives in Cambridge Road. Cllr Marshall &amp; Cllr Hayat did not feel they had enough information to make a decision.</i></p> <p><b><u>Debate Highlights:</u></b><br/>Cllr Carney could not see any information submitted with the planning application to support the need for the required work.<br/>Cllr Carney could not see any evidence provided for the required work.<br/>Planning Committee request that supporting information be supplied before approval is given.</p> <p>GPC Comments entered to GCP database 24/11/2022.<br/>Letter sent to GCP Case Officer on 24/11/2022 to request required information.</p> | Neutral       |
| 22/116.6    | <p><a href="#"><u>Demolition of existing garage and store, erection of single storey side and rear extension, and rear dormer and 3 front dormers (Retrospective)   2 Duck End Girton CB3 0PZ</u></a></p> <p>Ref. No: 21/04742/HFUL   Appeal Start Date: Weds 17 Nov 2022   Status: Appeal Awaiting decision</p> <p><b><i>Object:</i></b> <i>Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Muston. Unanimous.</i></p>  | Object        |

| Agenda Item                 | Item Description   | Action/ Power   |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|
|                             | <p><b><u>Debate Highlights:</u></b></p> <p>Whilst there was significant information for the appeal the Committee did not feel there is any change to the development therefore, they uphold the original objection of GPC Planning Committee.</p> <p>Note: As this appeal is proceeding under the Householder Appeals Service, there is no opportunity for you to submit comments. However, we have forwarded all the representations made to us on the application to the Planning Inspectorate and the appellant. These will be considered by the Inspector when determining the appeal.</p> <p>Any representations made under the original application must be made to the Planning Inspectorate by 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022. GPC original representations will not be withdrawn as original objections stand. See letter from GCP dated 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022 on page 5 of these minutes.</p> |                 |
| <b>22/117</b>               | <b>Public Consultations</b>  |                 |
| <b>22/117.1</b>             | <p><b><u>Boundary Commission Changes: St Neots &amp; Mid-Cambridgeshire</u> To approve proposed letter to Boundary Commission England from Girton Parish Council</b></p> <p>GPC Planning Committee do not currently have a Scheme of Delegation approved to allow agenda items to be considered by this Committee. The Committee also does not currently have required Terms of Reference. Girton Parish Council is working on these as a priority for approval at Full Council.</p> <p>This item was therefore deferred.</p>  | <b>Deferred</b> |
| <b>22/117.2</b>             | <p><b><u>GCP Cambridge Congestion Charges.</u> To approve proposed letter to GCP from Girton Parish Council</b></p> <p>GPC Planning Committee do not currently have a Scheme of Delegation approved to allow agenda items to be considered by this Committee. The Committee also does not currently have required Terms of Reference. Girton Parish Council is working on these as a priority for approval at Full Council.</p> <p>This item was therefore deferred.</p>   | <b>Deferred</b> |
| <b>22/118</b>               | <b>To Receive Correspondence addressed to the Council</b>  |                 |
| <b>22/119</b>               | <p><b>To Approve Communication of items from this Agenda</b></p> <p><b><u>Approval:</u></b> <i>Proposed Cllr Carney, Seconded Cllr Giles. Unanimous approval.</i></p> <p>Cllr Carney asked if there were any Matters arising from Previous Meetings. GPC Clerk confirmed that she was working on information to be published on website to show progress of Planning Applications. These aimed to be published on Community Website before Dec 14<sup>th</sup>. See also 22/115 comments.</p>  | <b>Approved</b> |
| <b>22/120</b>               | <p><b>To Request items for next Agenda</b></p> <p>GPC Clerk confirmed there were already 9 new Planning Applications to be approved before end of this year.</p>   |                 |
| <b>22/121</b>               | <b>Date of next meeting(s): To be Confirmed</b>  |                 |
| <b>Meeting Ended: 19:18</b> |  |                 |



**GREATER CAMBRIDGE**  
**SHARED PLANNING**  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne

Sent by email:  
Yvonne Murray

Girton Parish Council  
Clerk@girton-cambs.org.uk  
www.scambs.gov.uk | www.cambridge.gov.uk

Cambridge CB23 6EA

Dear Yvonne Murray

### **Notification of a Planning Appeal - Town and County Planning Act 1990**

Reference: 21/04742/HFUL  
Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and store, erection of single storey side and rear extension, and rear dormer and 3 front dormers (Retrospective)  
Site address: 2 Duck End Girton CB3 0PZ  
Appellant: Ms Navir  
Inspectorate Ref: APP/W0530/D/22/3307239  
Appeal Start Date: 17th November 2022

I refer to the above details. An appeal has been made to the Secretary of State against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council to refuse the application.

The appeal will be determined on the basis of **written representations**. The procedure to be followed is set out in Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Appeals) (Written Representations Procedure) (England) Regulations 2009.

As this appeal is proceeding under the **Householder Appeals Service**, there is no opportunity for you to submit comments. However, we have forwarded all the representations made to us on the application to the Planning Inspectorate and the appellant. These will be considered by the Inspector when determining the appeal.

If you wish to withdraw any representations you made on the application, you must make this request to the Planning Inspectorate by **15th December 2022**. You can do this by emailing [north2@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:north2@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)  
If you do not have access to the internet, you can write (quoting the appeal reference) to:

RT1@planninginspectorate.gov.uk The Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol, BS1 6PN.

The appeal documents are available for inspection online at  
<https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/online-applications/PLAN/21/04742/HFUL> .

If you do not have access to the internet you can use one of the public access kiosks at South Cambridgeshire Hall (address above) or Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge CB2 1BY during normal office hours.

The Planning Inspectorate aims to deal with appeals following this procedure within 8 weeks of the appeal start date. When made, the decision will be published online at <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

John McAteer  
Planning Officer

Email: [Appeals@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:Appeals@greatercambridgeplanning.org)  
Direct dial: 01223 457459

To: The Planning Inspectorate  
f.a.o: Case Officer - Aisosa Charles  
Ref: APP/W0530/W/22/3307903  
Site: Former Felix Hotel, Whitehouse Lane, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0LX  
Date: 5 December 2022

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

I am writing in regard to appeal reference (APP/W0530/W/22/3307903) which relates to South Cambridge District Council's unanimous decision to reject planning application (21/00953/FUL). I am against the appeal proposals.

This letter is additional to representation previously submitted during the public consultation period that, per the Site Planning Notice [1], requested comment by 24/05/2021, a date echoed in the "Important Dates" section of the local planning portal entry [2] and which was widely understood to be the public consultation cut-off date. The material considerations I raised then were reflected in the reasons provided within the refusal Decision Notice [3] so need no repetition.

My comments here are intended to support transparency and efficiency of the appeal process, and relate to:

- 1) Outcome of the public consultation period at 24/04/2021 (78% Objections)
- 2) Robustness of the decision-making process leading to the refusal

Taking each in turn:

#### 1) Outcome of the public consultation period

Following publication of the Appeal Form [4], I note in section G.3 that the first reason to choose an Inquiry was given as "There has been significant public interest (47no. letters of objections, 33no. letters of support) in the application". This has clearly been drawn from the local planning portal's Public Comments section [5] but provides no granularity on the balance of submissions before versus after 24/05/2021. The associated Statement of Case document [6] repeats these figures in Appendix 2, s7.0 as part of the Committee Report prepared by LPA's Planning Department for the decision meeting of 13 July, rightly mentioning (s7.3) that full details of the representations are given on the council's website. That public record includes both date and postcode for each submission.

Given the Appeal Start letter para 2 [7] states the appellant's preferred choice was considered in deciding to hold an Inquiry, I assume cited reasons (in the Appeal Form) may have been a contributory factor. The government's official guidance on the process for efficient and inclusive consultation of planning applications [8] emphasises the importance of submitting comments within the public consultation period's timeframe (para 005). Whilst post-deadline submissions may be accepted on a discretionary basis (para 034), in consideration of a key goal of public consultation being to gauge feedback from neighbouring residents and community groups (para 001), I'd like it noted that data of the planning application's public comment section indicates:

- a) At the Site Notice's "comment by" date of 25/04/21, a total of 55 comments had been submitted with 78% objecting to the proposal, the vast majority (70%) of whom are located within a 2-mile walking distance of the site (source: postcode analysis, Google Maps Data);
- b) Of the 12 submissions made in support of the application by that same date, zero (0%) originated from the same 2-mile walking distance of the site.

The closest supporting submission came from the University Arms Hotel,

Cambridge CB2 1AD who, per s 1.4 of the appellant's original Planning Statement [9] shares the same parent company as the planning applicant;

- c) Several weeks after the Site Notice's "comment by" date of 24/05/2021, a further 25 comments were submitted which, collectively, showed a markedly different profile of support for the application at 84%, but still with barely any (just 8%) of those supporters originating from postcodes within the local site vicinity per the same 2-mile walking distance benchmark used above.

I believe this breakdown merits consideration in any assessment of the public interest and strength of local opposition to the proposal.

#### 2) Robustness of the decision-making process leading to the refusal

Based on the time line and content of emails released on the planning portal website plus the prolonged concern felt by many local residents, the process for progressing this application showed room for improvement. Delays, possibly



prompted by role changes, were likely compounded by the unprecedented upheavals in working practices that the Covid pandemic imposed on all of us

(indeed the appellant's original Planning Statement s1.4 [9] relates the impact of Covid-19 directly to Hotel Felix's closure). I have sympathy with frustration experienced by all parties.

Fortunately, those days are in the past. It was reassuring to see the application dealt with so thoroughly in the Planning Committee meeting held on July 13, 2022. The matter was called in by a Councillor for Girton, recognising the need to bring focus, clarity and closure to a matter of such local significance. The meeting – broadcast live [10] – was attended by planning department representatives, council members and the appellant. It allowed for in-depth discussion of the key issues; opportunity for specific queries to be addressed by the appellant; well-rounded and participative debate, and culminated in a unanimous vote to refuse the application on multiple grounds.

In gathering background information to a potential inquiry, I would recommend that viewing this meeting in its entirety would be a very worthwhile use of the Planning Inspectorate's time.

Thank you sincerely for considering these comments. I'm a great believer in transparency and inclusion within the planning process and am most grateful for the opportunity to participate.

#### References:

- [1] Site Notice (sent to you by LPA with Appeal Questionnaire, re Part 2)
- [2] Details / Important Dates subsection of LPA original application record <https://applications.greatercambridge-planning.org/onlineapplications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=dates&keyVal=QPCE54DX0AS00>
- [3] Decision Notice letter (sent to you by appellant with Appeal Form)
- [4] Appeal Form (sent to you by appellant)
- [5] Public Comments subsection of LPA original application record <https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=neighbourComments&keyVal=QPC E54DX0AS00>
- [6] Statement of Case for the Appellant (sent to you with the Appeal Form)
- [7] Appeal Start letter (sent by you to by LPA on 2/11/2022)
- [8] Government Guidance on Consultation and Pre-Decision Matters <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consultation-and-pre-decision-matters#Publicconsultation>
- [9] Planning Statement (which may have been sent to you with the Appeal Form as ID15 per the "List of the original planning material sent to the Local Planning Authority"; sent as ID12 per Covering letter to LPA accompanying the original application)
- [10] South Cambridgeshire DC – Planning Committee meeting, July 13 2022  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzdpAguvvU0>

-end-

6th December 2022

Cllr Thomas Bygott  
9 Station Road  
Oakington  
Cambridge CB24 3AH

07765 475 513  
cllr@bygott.net

The Planning Inspectorate  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol BS1 6PN

Dear Planning Inspectors,

**Former Felix Hotel, Whitehouse Lane, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0LX  
APP/W0530/W/22/3307903**

I write regarding an appeal of South Cambridgeshire District Council's decision to refuse planning permission in the above case. My purpose in writing is to request that the Planning Inspectorate **rejects** this appeal.

At the time of the original application I was one of the two district councillors for Girton and called the application in to the South Cambridgeshire District Planning Committee on 2nd May 2021 and spoke at the Planning Meeting on 22nd July 2022 at which the committee unanimously rejected the application. Although I now represent a different ward on the council, I have remained involved in this case as there is a clear public interest in protecting this fine Victorian building from demolition.

In the District Council's letter of Refusal of Planning Permission issued after its decision on 22nd July 2022, three reasons for refusal are cited:

1. The first cites the Green Belt and paragraphs 147-150 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF),
2. The second cites the loss of the non-designated heritage asset and paragraph 203 of the NPPF, and
3. The third cites both these forms of harm and the very special circumstances required by paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF.

In the appellants Statement of Case, they make arguments for the benefits of their proposal and the very special circumstances that might be balanced against the harm it would cause. In paragraph 6.8 of the Statement of Case, they cite a previous appeal that was upheld (APP/W0530/W/21/3280395) in which a retirement village had been proposed on Green Belt land in Stapleford.

Despite some similarities, there is a fundamental difference between these cases that stems from the necessity of the harm that must be done in order to achieve the benefits of each proposal. In the Stapleford case, the harm arises merely by the building's presence in the landscape and its visibility in local views, including from nearby heritage assets.

This case is very different because it involves the total loss of a heritage asset, the Victorian country house formerly known as Howe House and latterly as the main block of the Hotel Felix, and that this loss is not necessary in order to achieve the benefits of the proposal. The harm does not arise merely by proposed building's existence or by use as a

care home, but by the specific design decision to demolish Howe House, which is one of many possible design decisions that could be made on this site.

Paragraphs 199 to 202 of the NPPF lead up to the paragraph 203 that is cited in the second reason for refusal. These paragraphs make clear that there is a balance that must be weighed between harm to a heritage asset on the one hand and public benefits that would arise from the proposal on the other hand. For such a balance to exist, there must be a causal link between the benefits and the harm such that the harm is necessary to achieve the benefits.

As I pointed out at the Planning Committee on 22nd July 2022, Howe House is a relatively small building on a very large plot of land and there is ample room to build a care home on the site without demolishing it. When the Hotel Felix had been approved in 2002, the design incorporated the Victorian building, Howe House, as the central block of a much larger hotel complex. It was thought at that time that the economic benefits from the use as a hotel would provide the funds for the building to be restored to its former glory. From that time until the hotel's closure during the coronavirus pandemic, its former owners kept the Victorian building in an exceptionally good state of repair. There is no reason why the applicants could not have designed their proposed buildings next to or around Howe House in the same way that the hotel had been.

### **Heritage value of Howe House**

In paragraph 6.32 of the Statement of Case, the appellant states that "No conservation areas or listed buildings would be unacceptably impacted upon by the proposed development." This is factually incorrect as Howe House is locally listed on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) with number 05482. Being locally listed isn't quite the same as being nationally listed as Grade II, II\* or I, but as paragraph 189 of the NPPF makes clear, buildings of local historic value "should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations" as part of a scale that goes up from locally through nationally listed buildings to World Heritage Sites.



Before lodging the initial planning application, the appellant applied for and received a Certificate of Immunity from listing: number 1472304 in November 2020. The main reason that this certificate was issued is that it is extremely difficult for Victorian buildings to qualify for national listing, even as Grade II. Most buildings constructed before 1840 are listed. Howe House or The Close, as it has also been known during its history, was constructed in 1852 and only just misses out on being in the age category in which listing is much easier to obtain.

In the words of the Victorian Society, who have helped with the campaign to save the building and have added Howe House to their list of endangered Victorian country houses:

*"We recognise that a Certificate of Immunity has been issued for the building, but it is imperative to stress that this does not render a building devoid of architectural or historical interest. The criteria for national listing has become increasingly strict, and the standard that must be met for post 1850 country houses is particularly high given their relative abundance nationally. Despite not quite meeting these criteria, Hotel Felix should be considered a nondesignated heritage asset of great local significance and treated as such."*

It is important to note that the relative abundance of Victorian buildings nationally partly arises from their solid construction and durability. There are also particular types and designs of Victorian buildings of which there are a large number of very similar examples. The design of Howe House differs from these popular and abundant designs. Although some of its features, such as circular bow windows and Dutch gables, are seen on other Victorian buildings, the combination of these features forms part of a unique, highly individual and creative composition. Howe House should be seen as a building that has only very narrowly failed to qualify as a Grade II nationally listed building and one which will probably one day become listed, as our society comes to better understand Victorian architecture and appreciate its value.

As a building of solid construction and durability, Howe House was built without using the obsolescent components, such as steel lintels, joist hangers or steel reinforcement bars in concrete that are used in modern construction. That means that it is capable of surviving indefinitely with regular maintenance. Even if the building were replaced by an exact replica, its replacement would be limited to a short, approximately 75 year, lifespan. The proposed replacement building is of a traditional design which seems to have been well-received. I have no objections to the proposed design - other than the demolition of Howe House. Whatever the merits of this proposed building, the replacement of an essentially permanent building by a temporary one should be regarded as an irreplaceable loss.

### **Need for a review of the design proposal for this site**

In my call-in request, I made reference to the possibility of holding a Design Review Panel as an alternative to the application being refused. This was originally the suggestion of one of the Council's conservation officers and in my view should have been the preferred path for processing this application and improving the proposal to the point where it complies with planning law and is considered acceptable to the local community.

When an applicant puts forward a development proposal, there is often a process of consultation with the planning officers, neighbours and the local community in which small changes to the design are considered that would mitigate the impact of a proposed building and render it more acceptable in the eyes of stakeholders who might otherwise oppose the proposal. Occasionally, a proposal is submitted by an applicant whose stubbornness, intransigence and refusal to consider reasonable alternatives shortcuts this process. The result is an immature or incomplete proposal that unnecessarily generates opposition because of a few minor details where a general principle of development might otherwise have been uncontested. The general consensus amongst local residents who have looked at the proposal seems to be: "I like their new building, but why do they have to demolish the old one?". Despite the long period of time that has elapsed since the application was first submitted, this is still an open and unresolved question.

Not all heritage buildings, be they locally or nationally listed, survive a planning application to demolish and replace them. However, the most basic level of protection given to these buildings in the planning system is to consider alternatives and explore what possibilities exist for preservation. This is not guaranteed to be successful, but consideration of this question, preferably in a public forum, satisfies stakeholders that the loss was unavoidable.

There are still a large number of unexplored possibilities that exist for how an 80 bed care home can be constructed on this site without the need to demolish Howe House. Those possibilities include using Howe House as an integral part of the care home, with split floor elevators installed to avoid the need for residents to walk up or down stairs. There is also the possibility of building the care home next to or around the preserved villa. There are many ancillary uses such as administration, offices, staff or visitor accommodation that Howe House could be used for without the need to directly connect the old and new buildings with a change of floor levels.

The latter possibility raises the question that the proposed facility might not fit the volume or area of buildings to be replaced. This is addressed within paragraph 208 of the NPPR:

*"208. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies."*

I recommend that the appeal for this current application be **rejected**. The best way forward after that is for the applicant to submit a revised application after considering how the preservation of Howe House can be achieved alongside their other objectives.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a long horizontal line, and the name 'Bygott' written in a cursive script to the right.

Tom

**Cllr Thomas Bygott**

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor for Longstanton, Northstowe,  
Oakington and Westwick

## Guidance For Visitors to Girton Parish Council

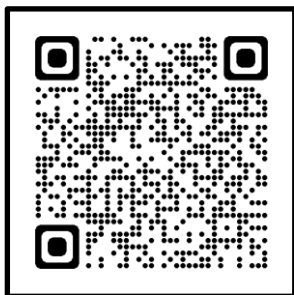
The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0FH.

Tel: 01223 618619

### NOTICES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

#### Parish Council Agenda

A full copy of this agenda with appendices and reports may be found on the Parish website at <https://www.girton-cambs.org.uk/girton-parish-council/> or requested from the Clerk. Our Village Noticeboards will include a copy of the agenda only including this guidance page. Webpage QR Code below.



#### Public Participation

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and any other Girton Parish Council public meeting. If you wish to raise a question or topic at the meeting it will help us if you contact the clerk, who will be pleased to explain the procedure. Clerk email: [clerk@girton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@girton-pc.gov.uk). Members of the public may address the Council within an allotted time of 15 minutes during Public Participation on the agenda.

#### Exclusion of Press and Public

The press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended.

Items to be confirmed here/

#### First Aid

If you feel unwell or need first aid, please alert a member of staff.

#### Toilets

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Girton Parish Council are open and transparent about how we make decisions. The Council may record public meetings. Recording, filming and photography at Council, Committee and other meetings is allowed where members of the public can attend, so long as proceedings at the meeting are not disrupted. Members of the public may not speak during Council proceedings. We also allow the use of social media during meetings to bring Council issues to the attention of a wider audience. To minimise disturbance to others attending the meeting, please switch your phone or other mobile device to silent/ vibrate mode.

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No one can smoke at any time within the Pavilion or at any Council meeting.