

South Cambs planning committee: Mitre planning application

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee regarding this planning application.

In Histon & Impington the community at large and the Parish Council in particular are firmly against this application and ask that it be refused.

It is bad in so many ways.

1. it's not a sustainable development. It reduces employment in the community and it reduces retail diversity. Furthermore although there is housing there is insufficient affordable housing to respond to the needs of the community.

2. it's incompatible with the wishes of the community and with existing and developing planning policy at South Cambs. The community has made its opinion clear in its opposition to this application in particular and to its support for the H&I proposal in South Cambs Local Plan. Existing planning policy at South Cambs already designated Histon & Impington as a rural centre with all that that means for a sustainable and substantial community and the Local Plan which it has just approved includes the H&I proposal of which this site is a part.

3. the design itself is inappropriate. Independent third party architects are clear that it is not a good design in absolute terms and that it does not relate well with the existing buildings in the neighbourhood. It does not exploit the opportunity that this location brings: successful adjacent destination businesses, close to the guideway and Vision Park and a potential gateway to the village.

Chair: we are not against modern design and are pleased to note that in recent years several new developments in Histon & Impington are modern and set standards for others to emulate. We support the radical if it brings a fresh approach and adds value. Our objection to this design is perhaps that it's not radical enough, it's a conventional office block design, and there's nothing in it which relates it to other buildings in the neighbourhood.

The Parish Council has made repeated offers to the developers to talk about some alternative development which would meet both the developer's investment objectives and the Parish Council's plans for the community. We've seen other examples of the architect's work and are impressed and would be pleased to engage with it to this end.

Finally I note that the developer proposes to take this application to appeal on the grounds of non-determination because the process is taking too long. It's maybe worth reflecting that if it had been confident about its design it could have gone to the Design Panel, got an OK there and then been approved today. Instead it's now going to be stuck in an inquiry process which will take months.

Please refuse this application.