

Faith | Volunteer Land November 2024

BNE – Urban Design
Greater Cambridge Shared planning



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BNE – Urban Design
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

For the Communities Team, South Cambridgeshire District
Council Version 2 – Incorporating comments from CG
Version 3 – Incorporating comments from HJ/JG

November 2024

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Section 1

Introduction, Context & Vision

Introduction

- 1.1. Northstowe is a New Town located 5 miles Northwest of the City of Cambridge, between the villages of Oakington and Longstanton, next to the Longstanton Park and Ride station which has direct transport links to Cambridge, connected by a guided Busway. When complete, the town would comprise of 10,000 homes to be delivered in three phases.
- 1.2. In 2014 an outline consent was given for Northstowe Phase 1 which would deliver 1500 homes, a mixed-use local centre, a primary school, employment and associate landscape infrastructure (See planning reference: S/0388/12/OL). The primary school, the local centre square, green infrastructure, Sports pavilion, a temporary community building and several of the housing parcels have been delivered. There is planning consent for a permanent community building adjacent the Local centre square. There is also outline consent for Northstowe Phase 2 and 3a and 3b.
- 1.3. In accordance with the Planning obligations (Section 106 – Northstowe Phase 1), land has been identified for Faith and Voluntary Groups adjacent to and south of Parcel 13 and north of Northstowe Phase 2 (see location plan). SCDC is setting up a process for Faith and Volunteer groups to bid for the land in order to deliver a building that suits their needs.
- 1.4. This guide is prepared to assist the council in articulating their strategic vision and expectation for the site, buildings, landscape and assess bids, proposals coming forward.

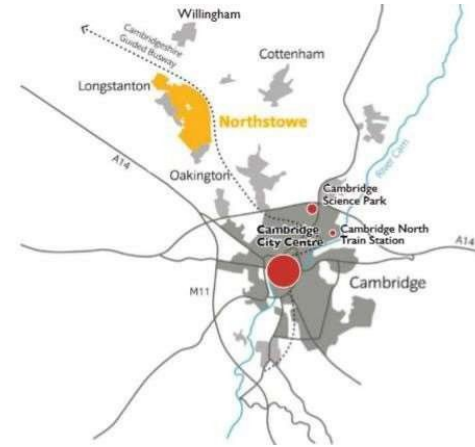


Figure 1: Location Plan



Figure 2: Illustrative Masterplan Northstowe Phase 1

Scope of the Development Guide:

- 1.5. The scope of this document is to understand the constraints and opportunities the site presents, establish some parameters to establish the capacity of the site and articulate the Council's vision, principles, standards and expectation for the design of a building for Faith/Voluntary groups.
- 1.6. Broad Objectives
The broad objectives of the document are to
 - Establish some parameters for building footprint, open space, parking, height and massing of building.
 - Develop design principles to articulate the vision, maximising the opportunities and overcoming constraints.
 - Establish performance standard for building including sustainability and biodiversity.
- 1.7. This guide will provide some parameters on what the site in this context is able to accommodate in terms of building footprint, massing, parking, landscape and public realm. It will provide a framework for aspirational designs to emerge. The guide should be used to develop future site brief, inform concepts, test ideas, develop detailed design by groups interested in bidding for the land and could be used as a starting point for detailed pre-app discussion with the local planning authority.
- 1.8. However, the guide is not a planning document but has incorporated feedback from Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and Cambridgeshire County Council, Highways. It has also incorporated feedback from those that attended the Northstowe Faith Strategy Group meeting in January 2024 and additional online presentation event (see minutes of the meeting- Appendix 1).
- 1.9. Whilst the document provides strategic design consideration for faith/voluntary building on this site, it does not provide detailed accommodation or technical requirements for any particular faith which will need to be developed by individual faith groups using their consultant teams.
- 1.10. Design framework plan, sketches and images are used to illustrate the strategic parameters for the site. They do not represent the final design and layout building and should not be used to restrict or to limit the imagination and creativity of future design teams/groups.
- 1.11. The development guide is prepared based on the assumption that the site is flat, and the services running under it will be redirected out of the redline.
- 1.12. The development guide is set out in 3 chapters:
 - Section 1 introduces and sets out the scope, site analysis and vision for the site.
 - Section 2 presents some of the findings of the research carried out on recently completed faith buildings in Greater Cambridge which have helped inform the guide.
 - Section 3 provides strategic development options to establish the broad capacity in terms of building footprint, height, and massing. It also sets principles, standards of what a building needs to achieve.

Context of the Faith/Volunteer land & building In Northstowe

- 1.13. Northstowe is a sustainable town planned to provide good strategic cycle and pedestrian connectivity across the settlement and incorporates a Busway providing good connectivity to Cambridge City.
- 1.14. The Northstowe Area Action plan policy NS9 required Northstowe to provide services and facilities to be delivered by the voluntary and community sector which are essential to successfully establish a sustainable community and where appropriate through the provision of serviced land suitable for their development e.g., faith, social sporting clubs etc.
- 1.15. In 2007 Cambridge Horizons commissioned a study to identify best practice in making provision for facilities for faith groups in the major new developments, as part of the wider community facility provision in the Cambridge Sub-region. The impetus for the study was the recognised role that faith groups can play in building cohesive new communities and the difficulties they may face in securing premises or other facilities. It made some recommendations including a standard, process, criteria for allocating faith land in large scale developments.
- 1.16. The S106 for outline planning permission for Northstowe phase 1 required the exact location of the faith/voluntary group land approved as part of the reserved matters application. Following negotiations with SCDC, appx 2500 sq. m. was allocated. The site lies to the south-east of Northstowe phase 1, adjacent to the Water Park and south of parcel H13.



Figure 3. Faith/Volunteer Land – Site Location Plan

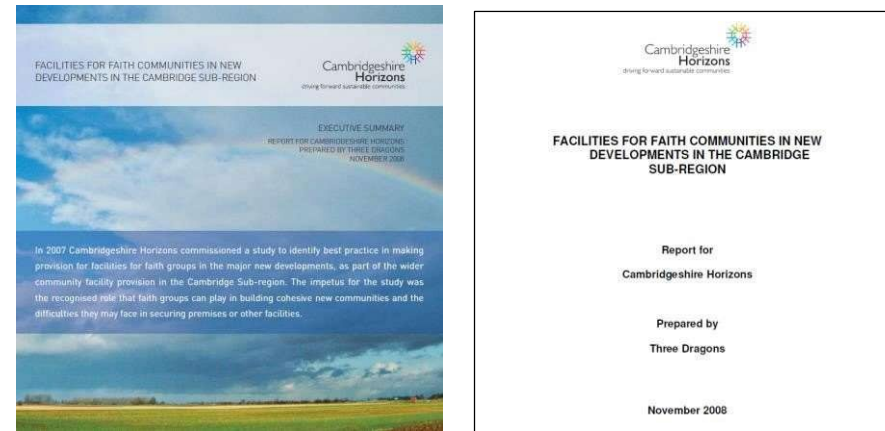


Figure 4. Facilities for Faith communities in New developments in the Cambridge Subregion, Cambridge Horizons, Nov 2008

Vision for Northstowe

- 1.17. The vision for Northstowe is to create a 21st Century Town with a strong local identity that combines the best historic characteristics with sustainable pattern of living and lifestyle choice. It is based on an urban grid form pattern, with excellent cycling and pedestrian connectivity, links to a dedicated busway connecting to Cambridge and having good access to green/blue infrastructure, that draw its inspiration from fen landscapes (waterbodies, drains and ditches). : Northstowe Community Building, Northstowe House and Northstowe Secondary School are some of recently approved or completed buildings in Northstowe that exemplify the character, image and identity of the town.
- 1.18. The design of any faith/volunteer building should consider its unique communal, religious, and voluntary uses and should take advantage of its context: views to the lake and landscape. It should be designed to be of its time, distinctive, reflecting the identity of the faith/voluntary group, having a special relevance and a response which is unique to Northstowe.
- 1.19. Its design should build on its religious/voluntary significance and identity whilst reflecting a building built in the 21st century addressing the challenges of our time on tackling climate change through sustainable design.
- 1.20. It should take account, contribute and enhance the physical and natural setting carefully considering its form transitioning gracefully into the wider landscape.



Figure 5: Top: Northstowe Community Building; Middle: Northstowe house; Bottom: Northstowe Secondary School

Planning policy, Parameter Plans, Design Code and Landscape Strategy

- 1.21. As part of the outline permission for Northstowe Phase 1: S/0388/12/OL, a set of parameter plans have been approved, that show the distribution of land uses, primary movement routes, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, height of buildings and green infrastructure for the area. There is also a design code and landscape strategy for Northstowe phase 1 approved.
- 1.22. As the location of the faith/voluntary land was finalised post outline consent, approval of the design code and the landscape strategy of Northstowe phase1, these documents do not contain the location and detail for the faith/voluntary land. **Clarification needs to be sought with planning on any update required to the approved landscape strategy and parameter plans.** However, in responding to this guide, proposals should consider how proposals respond to the surroundings parameters, design code and landscape strategy, taking account of what has been given permission and developed. As the site is also located adjacent to phase 2, it should also consider the landscape strategy set within the document.
- 1.23. Special consideration should be given to the planting, design and landscape strategy for the Water Park and lake areas. Soft landscaping strategies and lists of planting typologies/ species selection are provided in the Design Codes and other preparatory materials for the design of Northstowe (i.e. Chapter 4.9 Soft Landscape, Phase 2 Design Code). The

planting specifications should be followed, where practicable and references should be cited.

- 1.24. Onsite car parking remains one of the key challenges for the site. As the site is in a sustainable location and surrounded by good cycling and walking routes/infrastructure, close to and well connected to the park and Ride, **the principle of a much lower parking standard, subject to justification as part of the planning application process is sought.** Options for sharing car parking provision with adjacent schools should also be explored.
- 1.25. Proposals will also need to adhere to the National and local planning policy requirements. These includes, but are not limited to, the following:
- National Planning Policy Framework,
 - Planning Practice Guidance,
 - National Design Guide,
 - South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted Sept,2018,
 - Design Codes for phases 1 & 2.
 - Cambridgeshire Flood & Water SPD,
 - Sustainable Design & Construction SPD,
 - Biodiversity SPD,
 - District Design Guide SPD,
 - Landscape in New Developments SPD,
 - Open Space in New Developments SPD,
 - Trees & Development Sites SPD, and
 - Northstowe Area Action Plan.
- 1.26. A review of these documents should be undertaken by the design team to inform the development constraints and opportunities of the site to ensure the proposals are compliant with local and national planning policy.

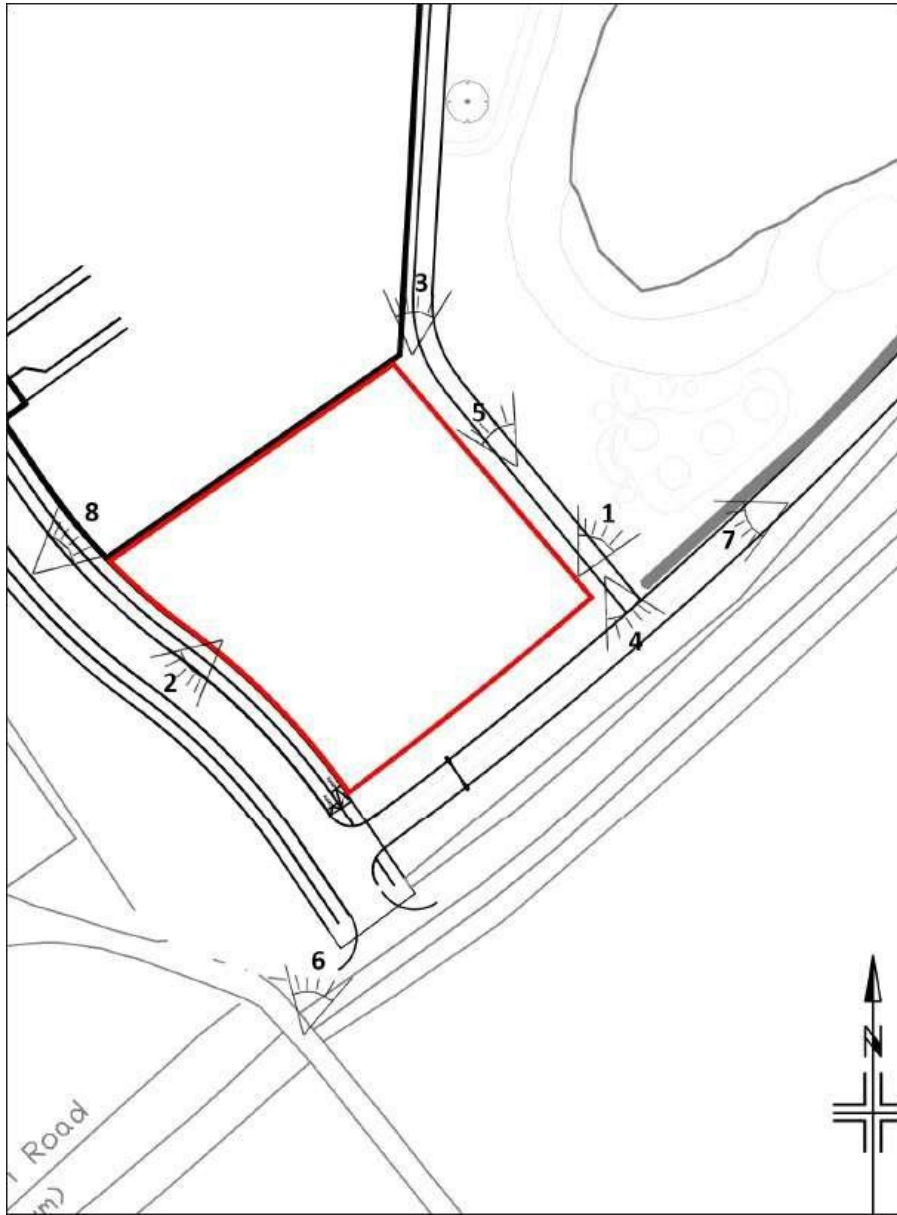


Figure 10: Site plan and Photos

Site Analysis: Constraint and Opportunities

- 1.27. This section of the guide analyses the physical issues, constraints and opportunities of the site for a faith/voluntary building which needs to be considered whilst developing a site brief and detailed design. It will inform the layout options, height, scale, massing, parking and landscape response.
- 1.28. The site lies to the south-east of Northstowe phase 1, adjacent to the Water Park and just north of Northstowe phase 2 which includes the town centre, primary and secondary education uses. It is bounded by the Water Park to the east, Stirling Road to the west, Residential Parcel H13 to the north and a strategic landscape corridor to the south, beyond which is Northstowe phase 2. There are footpaths and cycleways located along the south and east linking the site to the surrounding villages and the 'park and ride' busway to Cambridge. Stirling Road is a primary road that provides access to the site.

Car Parking Provision

- 1.29. Proposals for a faith and community building should acknowledge the accessibility of Northstowe with good connections to Cambridge and robust infrastructure that promotes active travel. It is located close to and is well connected to the park and ride, the town centre, and educational uses. Development proposals should consider the good accessibility of the site by public transport, walking and cycling. It should also take account of parking infrastructure that is in place, in arriving at a minimum car provision on site, maximum the use of the site for building and open space. Any semi-basement used for parking should take account of the

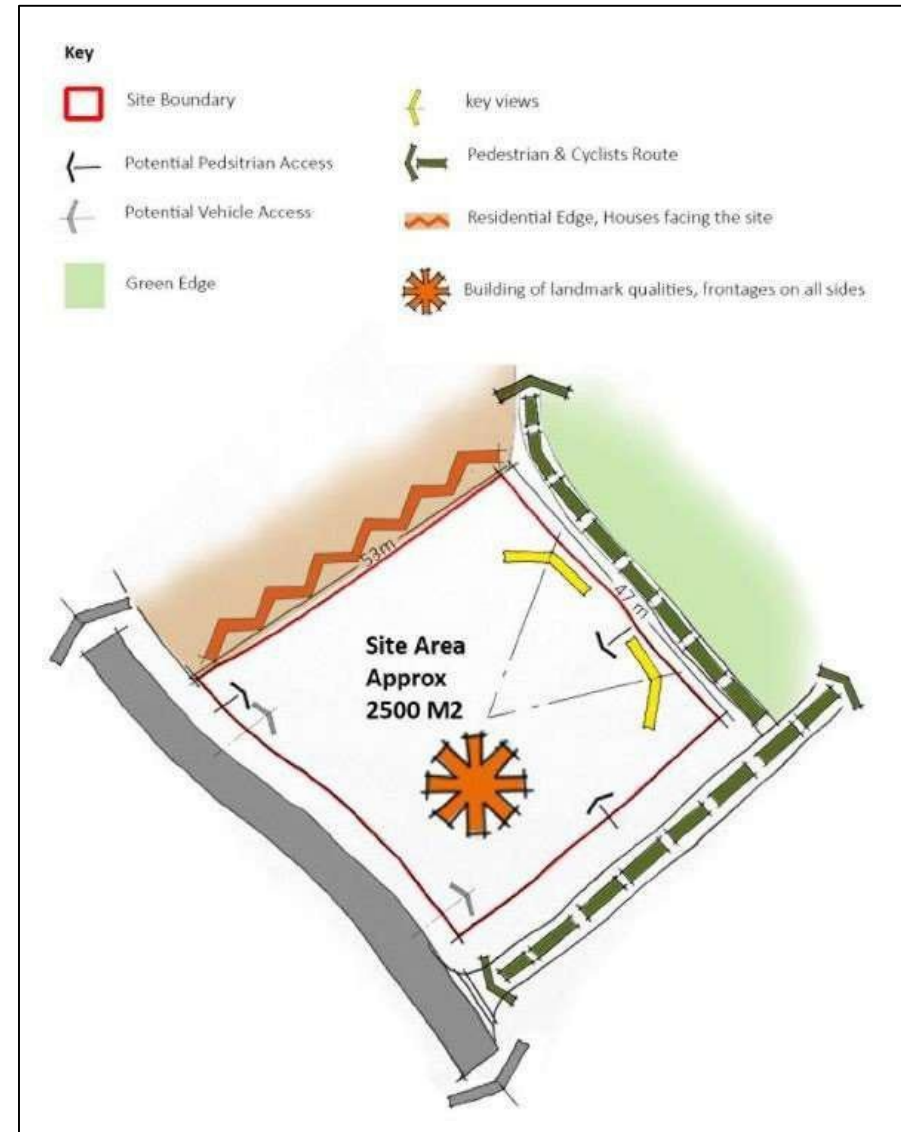


Figure 11: Constraints and Opportunities plan

Services, water table and flooding of the lake that acts as an attenuation for surface water for the entire phase.

Landscape and setting

- 1.30. The site is located in a prominent position, providing fantastic views over the lake, located within strategic landscape corridor and clearly visible from various vantage points. A building introduced within this highly visible landscape corridor should be of the highest quality, sensitively designed to sit gently within and transition gracefully into the landscape.
- 1.31. The site is positioned at the joining point between the east to west Phase 2 Greenway and the Phase 1 lake or 'Water Park' landscape. As such it is important that a visual link between these two landscapes is maintained to create a legible, sequence of landscape spaces for people exploring the site. It is therefore considered that the building should have a footprint so as not entirely block views and perception of 'openness' in the landscape.
- 1.32. There is an opportunity to link the lake landscape (the most extensive area in Northstowe) to the site or wider landscape through views, edge treatments and landscape character. The guidance in the landscape strategy mentions the need to take inspiration of the water park nature scape to create a harmonious character and incorporate it into the design.
- 1.33. The left-over spaces in between the redline boundary and the adjacent pedestrian, cycle routes to the north-east and south-east should be integrated within the design of the site and management arrangements of its immediate surrounding co-ordinated.

- 1.34. The site faces the public realm on all four sides and does not have a back. The faith/community building is a public and communal building and hence a careful balance needs to be achieved between the need to ensure safety and security particularly for vulnerable members like women, children and disabled versus avoiding a gated community. However, there needs to be absolute clarity between public and private spaces.

Quality Drivers for the building

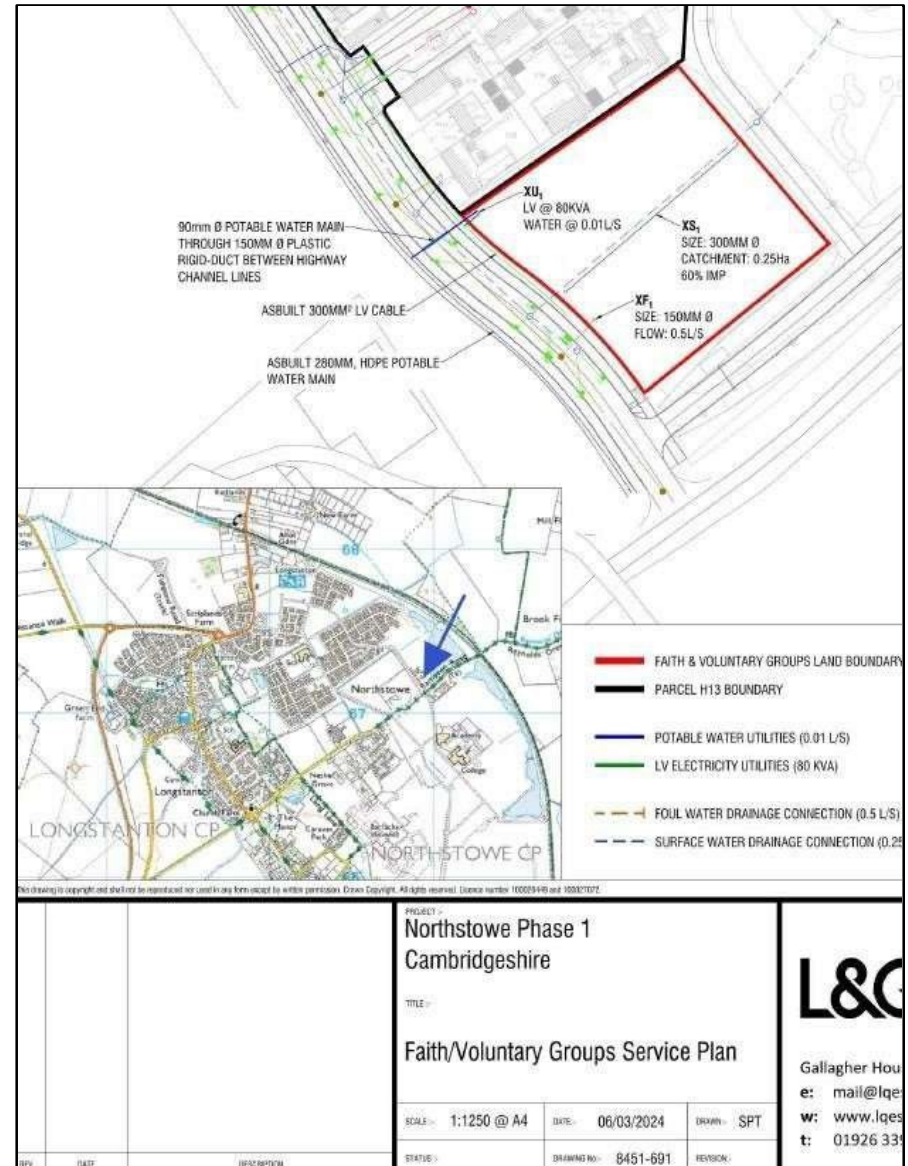
- 1.35. The site is visible from the public realm on all four sides. There is an opportunity to create a 'pavilion' building with frontages on all sides taking advantage of views to the lake as well as providing a front to the road. The building should have a strong identity having landmark qualities which can assist wayfinding and legibility but can be set comfortably into the landscape.
- 1.36. A landmark building does not necessarily need to emphasise height but can be designed creatively making best use of the internal space and volumes. However, there is an opportunity here for taller building elements to have some degree of greater height, ensuring its scale and mass sensitively relates to the adjacent residential parcels, whilst emphasising and managing the impact of the building and its features have on the skyline and landscape. Having a building with landmark quality does not necessarily need to add to costs but should creatively interpret its design, form and structure based on the functional, religious, and contextual requirements of its internal and external spaces.
- 1.37. Here, the importance of selecting an experienced and talented architect and landscape architect cannot be overemphasised.

Relationship to houses on Parcel H13

1.38. Parcel H13 consists of residential dwellings that are built in close proximity to the northern edge, fronting the site. There is a narrow pedestrian access way that leads to the front doors of these buildings, with some windows facing the site along this edge (See image 8, Page 11). The proposed building should be set away from the residential dwellings providing a level of privacy, a permeable landscape buffer in between the two buildings, encouraging natural surveillance, avoiding harsh boundaries, or narrow enclosure of the access facing the site.

Services:

1.39. There is a surface water drainage pipe that runs under approximately through the centre of the site and into the waterpark (see appendix 2). L&Q have committed that they will be moving the pipe outside the site before the site is formally handed over to SCDC. The development options and capacity of the site is established on this basis. Should the pipe stay in its existing location, the guide will need to be reviewed and questions whether one can build over the drain pipe, leave an easement, permission in order to do so will need to be established, to determine what development may be feasible posing a feasibility and time risk to the project. Further discussions with the planning authority, L&Q and Anglican Water are required to resolve this issue.



Section 2

Research & Case Studies

2. Research and Case Studies

- 2.1. Research was carried out on recently completed religious buildings in the Greater Cambridge with an aim to find out if there were any conclusions or lessons that can be drawn to inform the development guide. This chapter provides the findings and conclusions from this research.
- 2.2. The research looked at four case studies within Cambridgeshire area: Cambridge Mosque, C3 Church Cambridge, Cambourne Church and Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue. It also reviewed findings from the Cambridgeshire Horizons report for facilities for faith communities in the Cambridge sub-region, November 2008.
- 2.3. The purpose of the research was to see if there were any common similarities in the design of faith buildings that could help inform the space requirements such as building to plot ratio, floor area per person, car/cycle parking ratio and height of building. The research also examined how faith buildings functioned and broadly what kind of spaces were included in a faith building.
- 2.4. Table 1 provides the site area, the total floor space, the capacity of accommodation, the height, car and cycle parking for the four case studies mentioned above. The conclusions of the research are as follows:
- 2.5. There weren't any consistencies observed on how the size and capacity of the faith land was calculated with building ratio (calculates the built area divided by the site multiplied by 100) varied between 22.9% to 158%. This may be due to different contextual constraints and cost of land within

Building	Cambridge Mosque	Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue	C3 Church Cambridge	Cambourne Church
Site Area (M2)	4550	372	3100	4800
Total Floor Space (M2)	2800	590	2210	1100
Capacity	100 people at one time, up to 1000 people on Friday mid-day	Normal attendance 70, and full capacity of 200	900 people at one time	550 people at one time
Height	2-3 Storeys height, Mostly on GF	2 Storeys heigh, split on two so-reys	2 Storeys heigh, split on two so-reys	2 storeys in height, Mostly on GF
M2 per person	2.8	2.95	2.45	2
Parking Space	80 spaces	2 Disabled Spaces	20	56
Cycle Spaces	151	14	34	50

Table 1: Comparison of various elements in faith buildings in Greater Cambridge

urban/rural areas, accessibility of the site, the faith/community size, the type of facility (local or regional) together with the differences in how different faith groups used their buildings.

- 2.6. Although all four buildings provide an average between 2sqm to 2.8sqm per person, this figure cannot be generalised due significant differences in how different groups practice their faith and other requirements the building would need to cater to.
- 2.7. Hence our conclusion was that every site would need to be looked at individually. Its capacity needed to be context and design led, based on the physical and planning policy constraints. It had to consider the right balance between built area, open space and parking, a site in this location could accommodate and then up to each faith group to decide if the site is the best fit and would best meet all their needs and requirements.
- 2.8. These findings tie with the conclusions in the Cambridge Horizon report, November 2008 which stated that there is no single example of good practice to set out how provision for faith communities in new development is handled. The report also provided feedback from stakeholders which is useful to develop a guide and includes the following:
 - Early involvement of a faith group or consortium of faith groups in a new community is a major contributor to community development.
 - These premises will not necessarily look like a traditional place of worship but will be a multipurpose building.



Figure 12. Cambridge Mosque



Figure 13. Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue



Figure 14. C3 Church, Cambridge



Figure 15. Cambourne Church

- It will include large and smaller rooms which will accommodate a range of activities and age groups performing a variety of functions that meet its needs. Faith groups are not looking for landmark buildings, although local authorities and developers may view a faith building in this light for design/master planning reasons.
- Multi-faith premises are very difficult to manage and rare in practice, however ecumenical co-operation between Christian faiths is becoming a common way forward and may include the evangelical as well as the mainstream churches.

2.9. The report also highlighted various uses that faith buildings may wish to include and whilst some uses may be specific to individual faiths there were some common requirements that faith buildings should subscribe such as

- The multi-purpose nature of faith buildings.
- Buildings may need to include a main hall of worship but also provided a place for parents and carers to take children when they are crying, whilst still able to participate in the service.
- They should provide a quiet room so that children coming to the creche can sleep, play, and meet others in small groups.
- They should provide for toilets including for the disabled, a kitchen, foyer and office. They should be designed to include needs of children, wheelchair users, disabled and older people.

- 2.10. Each faith group should collectively develop, prioritise and balance their detailed requirement with their design teams, based on the planning, physical, costs and other development constraints.



Figure 16. Shri Venkateswara Balaji Temple, Birmingham

Section 3

Strategic Options & Design Principles

3. Strategic Options and Design Principles

- 3.10. This chapter sets out the strategic options to establish some parameters to determine the capacity of the site. It also includes design principles and performance standards on design, biodiversity, and sustainability to set the Council vision and expectations of a faith/community building.
- 3.11. The guide explores 3 strategic options in which the site could be developed in order to develop some parameters to establish the building's footprint, parking, open space height, scale and massing. These options are based on maximising the development potential of the site taking account of the physical, planning constraints and opportunities.
- 3.12. The strategic options do not limit the layout choices that may emerge and are not specific to any faith in particular. The options are intended to be a starting point to establish the capacity of development proposals and inform Stage 1 Project brief as per the RIBA plan of works 2020. Whilst the guide has incorporated planning and highway input from GCSP and Cambridgeshire County Council respectively, further pre-application engagement is encouraged to provide more certainty on the acceptability of concept designs and future planning applications as part of Stage 2 (Concept design) and Stage 3 (Spatial co-ordination) RIBA plan of works 2020.
- 3.13. The layout, design, sketches, and illustrations in the strategic options serve to illustrate the capacity of the site. The footprint, layout, built form and design approach can be quite different. These do not represent the final design and

should not restrict or limit the imagination and creativity of the design teams.

- 3.14. There were three broad configurations that building could be organised which provides different balance of car parking spaces provision and open space potential.
- Option 1 - Parking and landscape buffer separating the proposed building and the houses on parcel 13.
 - Option 2 - Green/open space separating the proposed building and house on parcel 13 with parking to the front.
 - Option 3 - Car free option at ground (could include solution of half basement for car parking – subject to water table/costs)

Please note that following engagement with the Cambridgeshire County Council and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, the options have been amended and attached as an addendum to the document with comments from Planning and Highways.

- 3.15. Options 1 and 2 the site could be capable of providing a building footprint of approximately 800sq.m. which provides a balance of car parking, buffer to the residential dwellings to the north and an element of open space. Here more weight is given to the building component and hence the building footprint should be treated as a maximum figure. Any reduction in its footprint would be able to provide more open space or car parking on site based on individual faith group needs. The assumption here is that the scheme can justify the level of parking based on the good accessibility of the site.

3.16. Option 3 is based on a car free area at ground level, but could explore a part basement car parking solution, if this is feasible/practical (in terms of not hitting the water table and reduce the risk of flooding) and viable in terms of costs. Option 3 could have a building with a slightly bigger footprint (still constrained by the distance from the residential units in parcel H13) but has been kept at 800sq.m. so that the site can benefit from the car free communal space and graceful setting a landmark building should provide. The assumption here is that the scheme can justify no parking on site based on its good accessibility. Alternatively, a part basement solution can be policy compliant if feasible and viable.

3.17. Early engagement with faith/volunteer groups have indicated that they would like to see some amount of parking on site.

3.18. Due to the constraints of the size site and its context, this site isn't suited for a building of regional significance. The detailed description, benefits and assumptions are listed below.

**Option 1
Parking and landscape buffer separation to parcel H13.**

3.19. This option provides 800sq.m. of building footprint, 15 parking spaces and a 300sq.m. of open space. The parking area and a landscape buffer separates the building from the residential edge. The faith building is located 18m away from the residential units.

3.20. Here the parking area is used as a means to locate the faith building away from residential uses with the building gaining prominence along the street. The assumption here is that the scheme can justify the level of parking based on the good

accessibility of the site. The site should provide the required minimum cycle parking standard based on policy TI/3: Parking provision of the SCDC local plan (1 space per 15sq.m.)



Figure 17: Option 1 – Parking/landscape buffer separation to parcel H13



Figure 18: Option 2 – Green/Open space separation to parcel H13

**Option 2
Green/open space separation to parcel H13**

3.21. This option provides 800sq.m. of building footprint, 13 parking spaces and 500sq.m. of open space. The parking area faces Stirling way whilst the open space separates the faith building from the residential edge. The faith building is located 18m away from the residential units. The assumption here is that the scheme can justify the level of parking based on the good accessibility of the site. The site should provide the required minimum cycle parking standard based on policy TI/3: Parking provision of the SCDC local plan (1 space per 15sq.m.)

3.22. In this option the faith building is set back with parking area located to the front facing Stirling Road. Although this option locates parking area away from the H13 residential parcel providing a better outlook and open/green aspect, it would on various occasions be used by the community for outdoor activity.

**Option 3 –
Car free option at ground level** (could include solution of half basement for car parking – subject to water table/costs)

3.23. This option also provides for 800sq.m. of building footprint no parking spaces on the ground level and 1500sq.m. of open space. Here the site is either serviced:

- off Stirling Road and all users are accessing the site by sustainable modes (walking, cycling or using public transport), parking remotely or



Figure 19: Option 3 – Car free at ground level

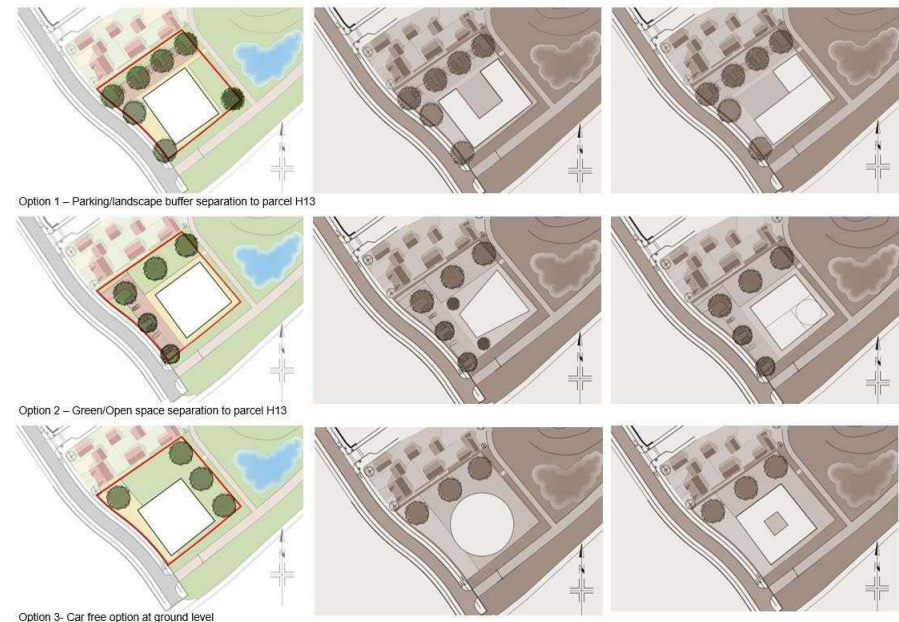


Figure 20: Alternative potential layouts using the three strategic options.

- by a part basement parking solution, subject to the practicalities of delivery: water table and costs.

3.24. The assumption here is that the scheme can justify zero car parking spaces based on the good accessibility of the site or equally be policy compliant based on a viable, feasible and deliverable part basement car parking solution. The site should provide the required minimum cycle parking standard based on policy TI/3: Parking provision of the SCDC local plan (1 space per 15sq.m.)

3.25. Here the balance is in favour of providing a landscape setting for the building whilst providing more open space for various communal/social activities. This option provides more flexibility in how the floor plate/layout of the building can be organised. A car free ground floor can release a variety of opportunities for formal and informal communal activities and uses to emerge over time.

Height, Scale and Massing

3.26. Faith/community buildings generally tend to have larger internal volumes even if sometimes they have only a single storey accommodation. Some buildings tend to have a partial mezzanine that overlooks the main gathering/prayer hall. The height within the main prayer halls varies significantly from building to building.

3.27. The site would be able to accommodate a building with a predominant eaves' height of 6-7.5m (2-2.5 residential storeys) above existing road level provided that its massing and built form:

- is modulated to a fine grain that is in keeping with the context,

- mitigates its impact on the residential units by setting the building away from the residential development by 18 m., with the nearest edge developed to approximately 6 m. to eaves/parapet.
- Subject to a Landscape assessment (LVIA/LVA)

3.28. The building should be predominantly a single storey with some mezzanine or/and first floor accommodation with volume rising up. The determination on the maximum height that can be acceptable will depend on the building location and the proximity to the residential edge. LVIA maybe required for buildings 2+ storeys height.

3.29. Elements, features and part of the building including roofs, spires, domes, minarets could rise above, provided they are sensitively integrated and their impacts on townscape and residential development mitigated. Taller elements should be located away from the residential parcel.

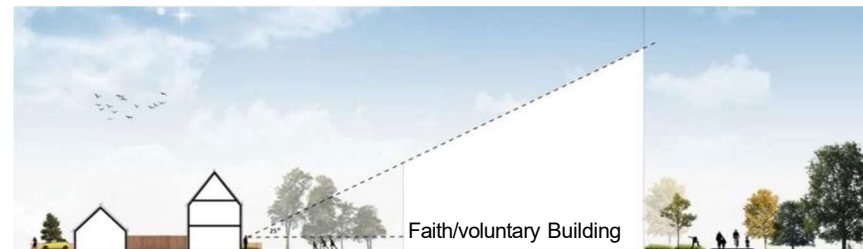


Figure 21: Building envelope.

3.30. Depending on the proposals coming forward, heights of the building would need to be informed by a landscape assessment (LVA/LVIA) that considers the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals using computer generated

accurately verified views from viewpoints agreed with the local planning authority. Sunlight, daylight and shadowing studies including sections through the site would need to be carried out to meaningfully assess the potential impact on residential development. These studies should be discussed during pre-apps with the local planning authority, the outputs of which should inform the design.

Design Principles: Building

- 3.31. The design of faith building should consider its unique communal, religious, and voluntary uses. The building has a role and status in the community and through:
- the expression of its internal design to serve the uses and functions,
 - response to external its landscape context and
 - addressing energy conservation, energy generation overheating, embodied energy, biodiversity,
- the building can make a substantial contribution to the place resulting in a building known by all, used by many as a 'landmark', without additional costs. As a result, the building will help give legibility, help wayfinding, and give identity to Northstowe (see fig 23 & 12).

It should not be designed as a landmark purely for master planning and urban design reasons but should derive these qualities through its communal functions, requirements, and response to context.

- 3.32. Its design should have a distinct identity that builds on the religious/voluntary significance of the community, whilst reflecting a building built in the 21st century, guided by the unique landscape context of this site.



Figure 22: Barmer Temple, Rajasthan India – Space Matters



Figure 23: New Temple Complex, Hampshire, UK – James Gorst Architects

- 3.33. As the site is located in a prominent position within the landscape and open space network between phase 1 and phase 2 and introduces a built form in this key corridor, the building should 'sit gently' within the landscape and should not impede on the current strategic functions and visual amenity.
- 3.34. Proposals should be informed by a landscape and context appraisal providing a strong thematic and conceptual rationale complementing its architectural design. Its built form should contribute and enhance the physical and natural setting by taking advantage of the views to the lake, sensitively incorporating a degree of greater height in the townscape assisting legibility and wayfinding and transitioning gracefully into the wider landscape. However, the building needs to be designed to a high quality, an object of elegance, an attractor and sculpture in the landscape.
- 3.35. The area allocated for building should strike a reasonable balance between building footprint, open space, and parking to retain the openness of the strategic landscape corridor and complies with SCDC planning policy.
- 3.36. Proposals would need to consider how the site links and connects with the adjacent cycle and pedestrian footways networks, establishing the shortest route to the entrance and exits. Proposals should show how they integrate with the left-over spaces immediately outside the redline.
- 3.37. Due to the site's location, designs should consider providing pedestrian links through the site leading to a vantage point to sit and enjoy for the entire community not necessarily visiting for religious purposes.



Figure 24: Community Church of Knarvik, Norway



Figure 25: Mosque in Preston, Luca Poian Forms

Proposals should provide a high-quality public realm around the building taking advantage of any level changes incorporating steps and ramps. It should consider the use of water (see landscape comments). Parking areas and road access should be paved.

- 3.38. The building will need to be designed as a 'pavilion block', i.e., building that doesn't have a back. Building should have active frontages on all four sides and will need to address all edges successfully including the main elevation facing the street.
- 3.39. The guide discourages a gated development but would need to ensure it provides for safety and security for all including children, young people, women, disabled etc. Building designs should incorporate thinking of boundary thresholds/treatments to define public, semi-public, and private spaces without the need for dominant fences.
- 3.40. The building should be positioned away from the residential edge. A minimum distance of 18 m separation with the residential units is suggested in order to address privacy and proximity to residential units. Building elements that fall within this distance need to justify the placemaking reason and assess impact on neighbours.
- 3.41. Buffer planting that is a mixture of low-level planting, hedges, and trees of at least 5m width should be provided along the entire edge facing the residential parcel H13. The objective is not to screen the development but to provide filtered views and natural surveillance whilst providing privacy to residents.



Figure 26: Chardedeu Chapel, El Salvador - EMC Arquitectura



Figure 27: Bosjes Chapel, South Africa - Steyn Studio



Figure 28: Church on the Water, Tadao Ando



Figure 29: Stanbrook Abbey Church, Yorkshire – FCB Studios

- 3.42. Designs should consider the use of robust, sympathetic sustainable natural materials and surfaces that are appropriate to the context of the site, that are distinctive, require least maintenance, weather well over time and have low embodied energy.
- 3.43. The building should ensure that they are detailed well including clean/crisp eaves/verges, detail soffits, expansion joints, changes in plane, lighting, boundary treatments, incorporate deep reveals, solar shading, splash courses, steps ramps, handrails, doors/windows, outdoor landscape, paving, curbs, rainwater goods, signage, roofs, chimneys, cycle parking, bins, surface drainage etc.
- 3.44. Cycle parking should be easy to access, safe to park, provided at grade so that it can be well used with good natural surveillance.

Design Principle: Landscape

- 3.45. As the site is located in a prominent position within the landscape and open space network between phase 1 and phase 2 and introduces a built form in this key corridor, it should be sensitively designed so that the visual link between the two landscapes is retained. The building should not entirely block views and the perception of openness in the landscape and help maintain the openness of the corridor/vista.

One of the ways to achieve and ensure a connection with the lake and eastern landscape corridor is by the building design incorporating a more open or perforated façade on its east and southeastern elevations to allow light to be seen through and across the building, creating a greater perception of openness and breaking down/ softening the edges of the built form.

- 3.46. A site-specific response is required from the design team. Proposals in form, concept and materiality should carefully respond to the site setting and enhance the landscape character.
- 3.47. A sympathetic, sustainable, and natural material palette should be selected for the building materials, surfacing treatments and soft/planting specifications. It is considered that an 'informal' over 'formal' design aesthetic would be more suitable contextually in the design response, with a stylistic emphasis on naturalistic and biophilic properties for the design.
- 3.48. Opportunities should be utilised to incorporate features such as SUDs, Green/Blue roofs and Rainwater harvesting (perhaps including decorative water features/ 'Suds on show' as part of a drainage element) to conceptually highlight the relationship between the site and its proximity to different waterbodies. As water holds a spiritual significance to all major faith groups, inclusion within its design could be a conceptual driver for the proposals.
- 3.49. Opportunities should be explored for indoor/ outdoor use spaces, such as spaces for outdoor social activities such

as yoga, public events, quiet reflection etc from which to appreciate views out to the lake and natural areas.

- 3.50. Tree planting should be used to enrich the setting of the building and create a good quality space.
- 3.51. The parking area should have some trees between the cars to stop them dominating the space.
- 3.52. The design should maximise the view outwards towards the green edge.

Design Principles: Sustainability

- 3.53. The building should take a design led approach to responding to the twin challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation. The design should prioritise the development of a low energy building that supports the transition to net zero carbon through passive design principles and the use of on-site renewable energy.

Design Principles: Biodiversity

- 3.54. The landscaping design needs to help enhancing biodiversity net gain. Issues below should be considered while developing the building design:
 - Green biodiverse roofs
 - Installation of bat and bird boxes.
 - Extension of the water park into the landscaping.
 - Hedgehog connectivity.
 - Wildlife sensitive lighting

Design Principles: Parking

- 3.55. Onsite car parking remains one of the key challenges for the site. A parking solution of 1 space per 4 seats/8sq.m. based on the SCDC local plan recommendations would most likely cover the entire site. However, the local plan states that parking standards are a guide and should reflect its location, its catchment, transport infrastructure, access to other transport modes such as cycling/public transport.
- 3.56. As the site is in a sustainable location and surrounded by good cycling and walking routes/infrastructure, close to and well connected to the park and Ride, a lower standard could be adopted but would need to be justified as part of the planning application process. Options for sharing car parking provision with adjacent schools should also be explored.
- 3.57. Considering the size of the site, a 'on ground car free option' would provide the most flexibility to organise the accommodation with good quality green space for communal activities.
- 3.58. It was suggested that there would be a need for minimum parking requirements on site for funeral, weddings, people with disability and servicing.
- 3.59. The guide includes an option that allows for approximately 12 - 15 parking spaces – need to provide landscape in between (numbers subject to review based on discussion with planning and highways). An option with part

basement parking is suggested subject to viability, feasibility due to the water table and deliverability.

Appendix 1: Minutes of Meeting of the Northstowe Faith Strategy Group in January 2024 and the additional online presentation event.

Appendix 2: Faith and Voluntary Group Service Plan

Questions for the Planning and Highway officers

- Do the 3 options proposed provide a good balance of building footprint, open space and parking. i.e.
 - 800 sqm. of built footprint max.
 - the parameters on predominant height of 2-2.5 storeys and
 - 13-15 parking spaces in option 1&2and
 - 0 surface or policy compliant basement parking
- Are the above acceptable in principle from a planning point of view. Which option is your preference? Is there any option we should not pursue from a technical perspective – Why?
- Is the setback of 18m provided to residential parcels H13 sufficient/necessary. Can it be less – how much?
- Do the layout options meet highway requirements in terms of parking, access, turning heads, refuse etc? Do we need to provide any standards, technical requirements?
- Are there any concerns with the service plans provided in Appendix 2 by L&Q and the options presented?
- Do you have any comments to make on the guide and the design principles.

