

Oxford City Area

Dear Mr. Hancock,

As CPRE Rights of Way Convener for Oxford City, I should like to express our total opposition to both these applications and any other building development on Warneford Meadow on the grounds that the site with its network of public footpaths constitutes an irreplaceable location for local people from both the Old Road and Hilltop Road areas (as well as hospital patients) to go walking, jogging, exercising dogs etc. in a semi-rural setting within easy walking distance of their homes (or hospital beds), while people living in the Cowley and Lye Valley areas, who also use these footpaths as part of longer walks, would suffer a marked detraction from the quality of their walks due to the urbanisation of this site. In addition, while the developers claim that only 53% of the site would be overbuilt, the location of the buildings in the middle of the site would mean that the remaining open areas would be fragmented and optically reduced in size by the trees and bushes which currently give the site its semi-rural character, so that the overall effect would be of an urban site with a few green strips in between. This would mean that most of its footpaths would lose much of their current recreational value. Furthermore, while the developers claim that the rough grass covering much of the site contributes little to biodiversity, this largely results from it having been neglected in recent years and if the land were not developed, but instead sympathetically managed, both its biodiversity and its attraction for walkers etc. could be considerably improved. Finally we should like to point out that it is our understanding that, when this land was acquired by the hospital authorities of the day in the inter-war period, it was expressly intended to be used to provide hospital patients with fresh air and exercise and that the proposed development of the land therefore constitutes a betrayal of the intentions of the benefactors involved.

If, however, despite our objections and those of the many local people who greatly value Warneford Meadow as an open space, the proposed development were to go ahead, there are a number of points in the Design Statement with which we should take issue:-

1) While the obviously incorrect sentence on page 17 'This not allows for the retention of the existing public footpath routes but also...', (which presumably should read 'This not only allows...'), suggests that the existing public footpaths within the site would be retained on their definitive lines, it should be pointed out that the map on page 5 shows FPs 111 and 112 on incorrect lines in the vicinity of the teaching nursing home and that the map on page 18 suggests that the definitive line of FP111 would be obstructed by the 'landmark building'. We therefore wish to urge your Council to insist that all public rights of way within the site should be **retained on their definitive lines** and to ensure that no further obstruction of public rights of way occurs in the fashion, to which we have become accustomed when other developments have taken place around the Churchill Hospital.

2) We wish to point out that there is an inconsistency between the map on page 5 (which shows all footpaths on the site if not always correctly) and the statements on pages 7 & 18 referring to 'public footpaths' and 'public footpath routes' respectively and that on page 9 referring to 'Enhancement of Existing Public Footpath' which suggests that this section only refers to the long-standing FP80 and fails to take account of the additional public footpaths

added to the Definitive Map by a modification order in 2002.

3) As the proposed cycle track linking Hilltop Road to Roosevelt Drive would have a hard surface and would be likely to be heavily used, at least at certain times of the day, we consider it would be detrimental and hazardous to walkers for it to be routed over any existing public footpath. We would therefore urge your Council to ensure that the cycle track would not be routed over any public footpath and would be segregated from any footpath running alongside it.

4) As the proposed vehicular accesses to the site would cross the definitive line of FP111 in two places and that of FP112 in one and it is presumed that these accesses would bear a significant amount of traffic, we should urge your Council to seek the provision of pedestrian crossings at these points.

Regards

NICK MOON
Rights of Way Convener