Urban Design Consultation

Proposal: Capital & Centric Proposals – Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots	**Location:** Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots
Case Officer: Aaron Sands / Lucy Pateman	**Application:** TBC

The following urban design notes are in response to the Shedkm 'The Shires Huntingdonshire Council Design Review 02' document received 29/06/2025 and discussed at the 2nd Capital and Centric pre-application meeting on 22/06/2026. These comments also take into account information included in the first pre-application submission as presented at the meeting on 17/04/2026.

Contents

Town Centre Function and Displacement Effects 1
Huntingdon Bus Station 2
Princess Street Car Park 3
St Neots Tebbets Road Car Park 3
St Ives Cattle Market Car Park 4
Deck Access Housing - General Comments 6
House Types 6
Private Amenity Space 7
Car Parking 7
Cycle Storage 7
Density and Housing Mix 8
Sustainability 8
Design Considerations for Deck-Access Housing 9
Huntingdon 10
Huntingdon Zone 1 – Bus Station 10
Malthouse Close – Public Realm Improvements: 13
Huntingdon Zone 2 - Princess Street Car Park 14
Cowper House 15
Tebutts Road Car Park, St Neots 16
St Ives Cattle Market 19
St Ives Zone 1 – Cattle Market (Bus Station) Car Park 20
St Ives Zone 2 – Harrison Way Car Park 22
Recommendation: 23

Town Centre Function and Displacement Effects

The proposals would make a significant contribution towards housing delivery within Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. However, their delivery is dependent on the redevelopment of sites that currently perform important town centre functions, including bus stations and strategically located public car parks.

These facilities are fundamental components of each town centre's transport and accessibility network. They support footfall, facilitate linked trips, provide access to services and businesses, and contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centres. Their role extends beyond simply accommodating vehicles or public transport; they help ensure that town centres remain convenient, accessible and inclusive destinations.

The challenge of the proposed redevelopment therefore depends not only on the quality of the new residential development, but also on whether displaced infrastructure can be re-provided in a manner that maintains or enhances existing levels of accessibility and functionality.

At present, the submission focuses primarily on development opportunities and housing delivery, with limited evidence demonstrating how the wider transport and parking network would continue to operate following redevelopment. As a consequence, significant uncertainty remains regarding the potential impact of the proposals on the long-term vitality and operation of all three town centres.

Huntingdon Bus Station

The proposed redevelopment of Huntingdon Bus Station represents one of the most significant strategic issues arising from the wider package of proposals. The existing facility acts as the principal public transport interchange for the town, providing a centrally located and easily understood transport hub within walking distance of the High Street and the Railway Station. It currently accommodates a range of services operated by Stagecoach, Go Whippet and National Express.

The proposals would replace the existing bus station with three on-street lay-bys located within an extended contraflow arrangement on Princess Street. This represents a significant reduction in provision and raises questions regarding operational capacity, passenger experience and future network resilience. The extension to the contraflow, together with the existing pavement and the two existing one way lanes of the ring road would also result in a very wide area of highway infrastructure immediately in front of the site and extend the size of the Princess Street junction.

The submission does not demonstrate how the proposed layout would accommodate existing services, future growth, layover requirements (if required), passenger waiting facilities (noting the existing bus station has toilets and a indoor waiting room) or route interchange. Nor does it identify whether services would be relocated elsewhere or where any replacement infrastructure would be provided.

As a result, there is a significant risk that the proposal could fragment and dilute existing bus station functions rather than effectively re-provide them. Such an outcome could reduce accessibility, diminish legibility and weaken the role of public transport within the town centre with reduced patronage.

This uncertainty is compounded by the removal of options previously discussed through the pre-application process. Earlier concepts identified Mill Common Car Park as a potential relocation site (although there are concerns regarding the location and divorced proximity outside the primary town centre and accessibility over the Ring Road), while previous Council visioning work identified opportunities adjacent to the town centre car park serving Sainsbury's and Chequers Shopping Centre, along the bus lane of Chequers Way (see below). Neither option has been pursued within the current submission, and no alternative strategy has been presented.

Indicative bus laybys along Chequers Way bus route adjacent to the Chequers Shipping Centre and Sainsburys car park:



Furthermore, the proposals do not address the future operation of the existing taxi rank on Princess Street. The apparent reduction of the existing lay-by and the proposed servicing arrangements create further uncertainty regarding future taxi provision within the town centre.

Given the strategic importance of the bus station, redevelopment should only be considered where a comprehensive and deliverable transport strategy demonstrates that equivalent or improved bus and taxi facilities can be provided in a location that maintains the accessibility, convenience and operational effectiveness of the existing facility. The replacement of a town centre bus station with a small number of on-street lay-bys, without a clearly defined replacement strategy, is not supported from an urban design or placemaking perspective.

Princess Street Car Park

The redevelopment of Princess Street Car Park raises concerns that extend far beyond the site itself. The car park occupies a highly accessible and strategically important location within the town centre, serving the High Street, Commemoration Hall, Pathfinder House and other surrounding businesses. Its removal, when considered alongside the approved redevelopment of Bridge Place Car Park, would result in a substantial reduction in conveniently located town centre parking on the south-eastern side of Huntingdon.

The key issue is not simply the number of spaces lost, but the role those spaces currently play within the wider parking network. Centrally located parking supports spontaneity, convenience and linked trips between multiple destinations. Relocating parking to more peripheral locations may preserve numerical capacity but may not preserve function.

Without clear evidence, there is a risk that displaced demand will migrate to less convenient locations, increase pressure on surrounding residential streets and reduce the attractiveness of the town centre for visitors. Concern also arises from the loss of centrally located disabled parking spaces (9 spaces), which currently provide an important contribution towards inclusive access.

The submission does not demonstrate how the wider parking network will continue to operate efficiently, how user convenience will be maintained or what impacts may arise for town centre vitality and footfall. The loss of Princess Street Car Park should therefore be treated as a strategic town centre matter. Prior to any application being submitted, a comprehensive town-wide parking strategy should demonstrate that displaced demand can be accommodated without undermining accessibility, legibility, vitality or the overall performance of the town centre and that the wider parking network will operate at least as effectively as the existing arrangement.

St Neots Tebbets Road Car Park

The proposals include the redevelopment of Tebbutts Road Car Park (approximately 241 spaces, 6 disabled), representing a significant component of St Neots town centre parking provision. The car park also has 16 Sheffield stands for cycle parking and public toilets.

The existing car park is closely related to the High Street and key town centre destinations (including the St Neots Health Centre, United Reform Church and Moores Walk Shopping precinct), supports linked trips and day-to-day activity and forms part of a clear and established parking pattern within the town

The first pre-application proposals (as presented at the meeting on 17/04/2026) indicated that parking provision would be reaccommodated at alternative sites, notably Riverside Car Park and Rowley Arts Centre Car Park through the introduction of deck access parking. Whilst this represents an overall numerical increase in spaces (an additional 140 spaces indicated), the key issue is whether the redistributed provision performs the same functional role as the existing Tebbets Road car park.

The alternative sites are more peripheral in relation to the High Street (particularly the Riverside Park) and less directly connected to primary retail frontages and reliant on longer or potentially less legible walking routes. This creates a risk that the convenience of town centre access is reduced, fewer linked trips are made and overall footfall and activity within the core is weakened

As with Huntingdon, the success of St Neots town centre depends not only on the number of spaces, but on:

- where they are located
- how easily they are found and accessed
- how directly they connect to key destinations

The loss of Tebbutts Road Car Park represents a significant restructuring of the town centre parking system. As such it is not sufficient to demonstrate that overall parking numbers are maintained or increased; it must be clearly evidenced that the redistributed provision maintains or enhances accessibility, convenience and legibility at a town-wide level. At present, this has not been demonstrated through the pre-application submissions. It is also noted that parking provision on the market square has recently been lost through public realm enhancements approved under application 23/01383/CLPD which resulted in the loss of 32 parking spaces and 4 disabled space, with the reprovision of 8 disabled spaces.

Prior to any application, a comprehensive town-wide parking strategy for St Neots should be prepared, demonstrating:

- how displaced demand from Tebbutts Road will be redistributed
- how alternative provision compares in walking distance, convenience and accessibility
- how legibility, wayfinding and user experience will be maintained
- impacts on footfall, dwell time and town centre vitality

Furthermore, Policy PT3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan states *'The loss of public car and motorcycle parking spaces in the Town Centre will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal is accessible by other sustainable transport modes and that the loss of any such spaces would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.*

Support will be given to the development of a multi-storey car park provided that it is of an appropriate scale, mass and design and has appropriate regard to the Conservation Area and other heritage assets and is considered as part of a comprehensive transport and parking strategy for the Town Centre.

Support will be given to improving the quality of parking in the Town Centre so that it is convenient, safe and secure. Proposals for improvement are encouraged to include the installation of CCTV'.

Given the strategic importance of the site, redevelopment should only be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that the wider parking network will operate as effectively as, or more effectively than, the existing arrangement and that the vitality and viability of the town centre will not be adversely affected.

St Ives Cattle Market Car Park

The redevelopment of the Cattle Market car park represents one of the most significant interventions proposed within St Ives town centre and raises strategic issues relating to parking provision, accessibility and the long-term functioning of the town centre. The wider site currently accommodates the Cattle Market (Bus Station) car park, the Harrison Way section of the Cattle Market car park and the Waitrose car park. Collectively these facilities provide an important concentration of centrally located parking serving the town centre, supporting retail, leisure, employment and visitor trips.

- Cattle Market (bus station) car park - providing 197 spaces (15 disabled)
- Cattle Market (Harrison Way section) - providing 196 spaces (0 disabled)
- Waitrose, St Ives - providing 75 spaces, including 4 parent and child spaces (6 disabled)
- The car park also has 16 Sheffield stands for cycle parking and public toilets.

The proposals would result in the loss of the Bus Station Car Park and a substantial reduction in parking within the Harrison Way section. Based on the information provided, approximately 301 existing spaces would be lost, equating to around 64% of the current provision. Whilst the submitted material refers to the possibility of future deck-access parking, insufficient information has been provided regarding capacity, access arrangements, operational requirements or design. Consequently, it is not currently possible to assess the overall impact on town centre parking provision.

The principle and concept of decked parking requires further consideration in this location. The retained area is constrained by its triangular layout and the presence of mature trees which contribute positively to local character. These constraints may limit the efficiency of any future parking structure and create challenges relating to circulation, servicing and design quality. Equally important is the relationship between any parking structure and the proposed residential development. Poorly integrated parking could create inactive frontages, unattractive outlooks and an overly engineered townscape environment that conflicts with wider placemaking objectives.

Furthermore, it is unclear how any future decked parking provision would be accessed. The indicative proposals suggest access may be taken from Station Road via the Waitrose car park. Such an arrangement has the potential to increase traffic movements through Cromwell Place and Market Hill, placing additional pressure on streets that already experience significant pedestrian activity and contribute to the historic town centre environment.

The existing Cattle Market parking arrangements benefit from multiple points of access, including an entrance and exit from Meadow Lane at the northern end of the site, together with an entrance from Market Hill and an exit to Station Road. Retaining vehicular access from Meadow Lane should therefore be explored, as this would provide a more direct route to Harrison Way and the strategic highway network, reducing the need for vehicles to travel through the town centre and potentially improving the overall operation of the parking network.

Any future application should clearly demonstrate the proposed access strategy for replacement parking provision, together with an assessment of the implications for traffic movement, town centre circulation, pedestrian safety and the character of the surrounding streets.

A more comprehensive approach should be explored. Previous masterplanning work undertaken by the Council identified opportunities to integrate parking provision within mixed-use development parcels through wrapped or capped multi-storey parking solutions. Such approaches can maintain strategically important parking capacity whilst creating active frontages and improving the quality of the public realm. The current submission does not demonstrate whether these options have been explored.

Left: Huntingdonshire and St Ives re-development projects Jan 2018, Right: Cattle Market Masterplan Oct 2020:





Given the importance of the site to the wider operation of St Ives town centre, redevelopment should clearly demonstrate that:

- Replacement parking provision maintains or improves accessibility and convenience.
- Sufficient capacity is retained to support town centre activity.
- Parking structures are fully integrated within a high-quality built form.
- Existing landscape assets and mature trees are appropriately protected.

- The wider parking network continues to operate effectively.

In the absence of this information, the implications of the proposals for town centre accessibility, vitality and functionality remain unclear.

Deck Access Housing - General Comments

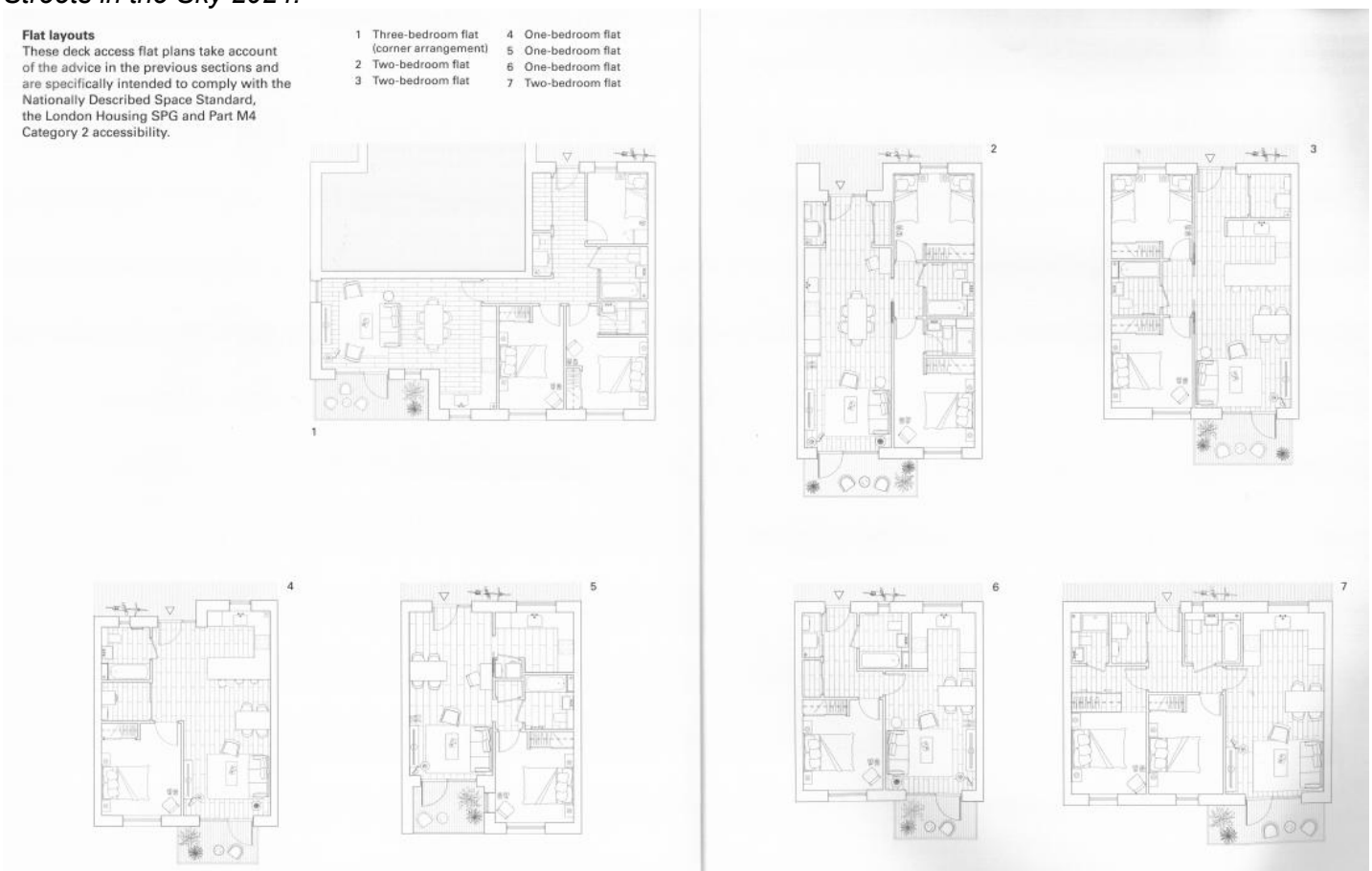
The proposals across all three towns rely heavily upon a deck-access housing typology. Whilst this approach has the potential to create distinctive and sociable forms of higher-density housing, its success depends upon exceptionally careful design and detailing. At present, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the schemes achieve the quality of environment necessary to support this approach.

House Types

The proposed apartment layouts are predominantly based on narrow, deep-plan one-bedroom units without balconies as individual private amenity spaces. This typology constrains residential quality and appears to have been driven by the deck-access model rather than the creation of high-quality homes. Bathrooms are generally positioned within the centre of the floorplan, with kitchen/living spaces facing the deck and bedrooms located on the opposite elevation. This limits opportunities for true dual-aspect accommodation, natural ventilation, daylight penetration and outlook.

Future iterations should explore wider and shallower plan forms that allow greater flexibility in room arrangement, improved daylighting and genuine dual-aspect living environments. Such an approach would also facilitate the provision of private balconies accessed directly from principal living spaces.

Example deck access house types as illustrated in the Deck Access Housing Design Guide: A Return to Streets in the Sky 2024:



Private Amenity Space

A significant weakness of the proposals is the limited provision of private amenity space. Very few of the proposed dwellings benefit from private balconies, terraces or gardens. Whilst communal amenity spaces can make an important contribution to residents' wellbeing and social interaction, they should not be regarded as a direct substitute for private outdoor space.

The current approach risks creating developments that rely almost entirely upon shared amenity areas whilst providing residents with limited opportunities for private outdoor use. This is particularly concerning given the predominance of apartment accommodation and the proposed deck-access housing typology.

The importance of private amenity space is reflected across both adopted and emerging planning policy. Local Plan Policy LP12 requires public and private amenity spaces to be clearly defined and designed to be inclusive, usable, safe and enjoyable. Similarly, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) requires residential development to provide an adequate amount of amenity space of an appropriate size, shape and location to support practical use by residents.

This policy direction is reinforced through the emerging Local Plan. The Regulation 18 Preferred Issues and Options Draft Local Plan states that all new dwellings, including flats, should provide private amenity space and emphasises that such spaces must be functional and capable of meeting the day-to-day needs of occupiers. The subsequent Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft strengthens this position further by requiring all new residential units to have direct access to private amenity space appropriate to the dwelling type and expected occupancy, including gardens, balconies, roof gardens, winter gardens or patios.

Whilst only limited weight can currently be attached to these emerging policies, they clearly indicate the Council's direction of travel and reinforce the importance of providing functional private amenity space as a core component of good residential design.

Future iterations should demonstrate how private amenity space can be integrated into the architectural design of the buildings from the outset. This may include balconies, terraces, winter gardens or enlarged defensible threshold spaces. Any such provision should be of sufficient size, shape and quality to support meaningful day-to-day use by future residents.

Car Parking

The proposals are generally presented as car-free, with only limited parking proposed within the Huntingdon Zone 2 and St Neots Tebbutts Road schemes. Whilst the highly sustainable locations are acknowledged, the suitability of a wholly car-free approach should be carefully assessed against the requirements of Local Plan Policy LP17.

Consideration should be given to the provision of:

- A limited amount of accessible parking.
- Potential undercroft parking opportunities.
- The opportunity for car clubs / zip car parking.
- Full policy-compliant cycle parking provision.

Cycle Storage

The level of cycle provision falls significantly below the requirements of Local Plan Policy LP17 – 1 space per bedroom. This is particularly concerning given the highly sustainable locations of the sites and the emphasis placed on car-free or low-car living. The St Ives scheme, for example, provides only 92 cycle spaces for 166 bedrooms – 66% of the policy requirement of 1 space per bedroom.

Where car ownership is expected to be reduced, cycle infrastructure becomes critical to the success of the development. Cycle parking should therefore meet policy requirements in full and be secure, convenient, well-lit and located close to principal entrances and circulation cores. See design requirements set out in the HDC Design Guide SPD 2017 – page 96-97. Cycle lockers / additional facilities within the cycle stores would be encouraged.

Density and Housing Mix

The proposals across all three settlements comprise a relatively limited housing mix, consisting primarily of one and two-bedroom apartments delivered through a deck-access typology. Whilst smaller apartment-led development may be appropriate within highly accessible town centre locations, further information is required regarding the overall density of each scheme and how this relates to the character and density and building typology of surrounding development.

Future submissions should clearly identify the proposed residential density (dwellings per hectare) for each site and compare this against both the immediate context and relevant local precedents. This should include consideration of nearby higher-density forms of development, such as Keyworth Court, Hawkins Court and other comparable town centre developments within Huntingdon, as well as higher-density terrace and apartment developments within St Ives and St Neots.

In principle, higher-density development is supported in these sustainable town centre locations where residents benefit from close proximity to services, employment opportunities, and community facilities which are highly accessible by walking, cycling and public. However, density should not be viewed solely as a numerical exercise. In order to make best use of land a design led approach to determine the optimum development capacity of sites should be applied. A design-led approach to optimising site capacity requires consideration of design options to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds to a site's context and capacity for growth, existing and planned supporting infrastructure, local character, and other local circumstances. The key consideration is how successfully the proposed development integrates with its surroundings and contributes positively to the character, functionality and liveability of the wider area.

It is important to recognise that high density does not inherently require tall buildings. Well-designed development can achieve high densities through efficient layouts, compact urban blocks, terrace housing and medium-rise buildings whilst still maintaining a human scale and strong relationship with the surrounding townscape.

As set out within the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, higher-density development must remain people-focused and should deliver a high-quality living environment. This includes appropriate scale and massing, attractive and usable public realm, sufficient landscape provision, high-quality amenity space and strong connections to surrounding streets and spaces. Density should always be informed by context, responding appropriately to its location whether within a town centre, edge-of-centre environment or more sensitive heritage setting. Future submissions should therefore demonstrate not only how much development is proposed, but why the proposed density is appropriate for each site.

Sustainability

The Council's recently adopted Sustainable Design and Construction Technical Advice Note (TAN) provides detailed guidance to support the delivery of low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally responsible development. The document has been prepared to support the Council's Climate Strategy and Place Strategy and should be used alongside the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, adopted Local Plan policies and emerging planning policy guidance.

Whilst the TAN does not introduce new policy requirements, it establishes clear expectations regarding sustainable development and identifies practical measures that should be incorporated at the earliest stages of the design process. Capital & Centric are therefore strongly encouraged to demonstrate how the principles within the TAN have informed the evolution of the proposals across all three sites.

As the schemes progress, sustainability should be embedded as a fundamental design consideration rather than addressed through isolated technological interventions. Future submissions should demonstrate an integrated approach encompassing:

- Energy-efficient building fabric and passive design measures.
- Optimisation of solar orientation and daylighting.
- Operational carbon reduction.
- Water efficiency and sustainable drainage.
- Urban greening, biodiversity enhancement and climate adaptation.
- Sustainable and responsibly sourced materials.

- Measures to reduce overheating and improve resilience to future climate conditions.

Given the scale of development proposed, future submissions should also provide comprehensive roof plans demonstrating how renewable energy technologies have been incorporated into the overall design. This should include the location and extent of photovoltaic (PV) panels, air source heat pumps, plant equipment, green roofs and biodiversity infrastructure. These elements should be considered alongside the architectural design from the outset to ensure they are successfully integrated and do not appear as retrofitted additions.

At present, insufficient information has been provided to understand the overall sustainability strategy for each development. A clearer explanation of how the proposals respond to the Council's climate objectives and Sustainable Design and Construction TAN will therefore be required as part of any future application.

Design Considerations for Deck-Access Housing

The submitted proposals should demonstrate how the following matters have informed the design process. These are summarised from the Deck Access Housing Design Guide: A Return to Streets in the Sky 2024 (DAHDG):

- **Privacy and sociability -** number of units accessed from deck per floor is critical – max 8, more likely 1-4. Higher the number more care needs to be taken with layout and detailed design.
- **Rooms overlooking the deck** – kitchens generally suitable or open span living dining kitchens with aspect to both sides. Privacy will be compromised for any rooms facing the deck - bedrooms are very difficult to locate fronting the deck given amenity impacts unless only a very low number of units are served off the deck or if defensible space is provided.
- **Defensible space** – wider decks provide private defensible space between unobstructed access zones and the face of the building. Opportunities for recessed thresholds to provide additional defensible space or voids in the deck floor to allow windows to be openable outwards. Opportunities for storage and personalization withing thresholds.
- **Noise Nuisance** – deck finishes should be solid construction – metal decking should be avoided. Decks should not be located above flats and especially not above bedrooms. Bedrooms and living spaces should be stacked between floors.
- **Access and Security** – important to control access to front door of flats for security of decks with 4 or more dwellings. Discourage unauthorized entry to decks.
- **Shelter –** decks need to be sheltered from the weather as they become slippery in rain and ice. Balustrade and screen design can reduce penetration of driving rain. Escape stairs must be sheltered.
- **Stair Cores –** should generally be fully enclosed internal spaces for protection from the rain and protection from smoke and fire.
- **Deck Width –** M4(1) requires 900mm, M4(2) requires 1200m, M4(3) requires 1200 with 1500mm passing places at the start and end, plus at intervals of 10m. DAHDG recommends 1500mm passing places are provided at the entrance to all flats to provide private thresholds for personalization.
- **Refuse Storage –** refuse storage locations should not exceed 30m
- **Ventilation** – for effective cross ventilation, max plan depths should be four times the ceiling height. i.e. 2.5 x 4 = 10m.

The principle of deck-access housing is not objected to in itself, however, its successful delivery requires a significantly higher level of design resolution than has currently been demonstrated. Future submissions should place greater emphasis on residential quality, private amenity provision, privacy, security and environmental performance to ensure that the proposed developments provide attractive and sustainable places to live.

Huntingdon

This comprises two distinct zones:

- Zone 1: 'The Gateway' – two linear 5 storey pitched roof deck access blocks on the Bus Station site
- Zone 2: 'The Neighborhood' – two 3 storey pitched roof deck access blocks on the Princess Street Car Park site and 'The Community' – conversion of No. 30 High Street (Hunts Post building).

The Bus Station site falls within the Historic Centre Periphery Character Area identified within the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD. This area represents an important transition between the historic centre, Mill Common and the Ring Road corridor. Development is expected to strengthen gateway functions, improve connections to the town centre, support regeneration opportunities and respond positively to its context.

The Princess Street Car Park and No. 30 High Street sites lie within the Historic Centre Character Area, where development is expected to reinforce the historic urban grain, conserve heritage significance and contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area. Development should reflect the established scale, materials and architectural character of the town centre whilst improving accessibility and activity within the historic core.

Given their prominent locations and relationship with the historic centre, both sites require a highly context-led design response. The success of the proposals will therefore depend not only on the quality of the individual buildings but also on their contribution to the wider townscape, heritage setting and public realm.

Huntingdon Zone 1 – Bus Station

The Bus Station site occupies a prominent gateway location on the southern approach to Huntingdon town centre. It is highly visible from Mill Common, Walden Road (Ring Road), Pathfinder Link Road, the A1307 and Mill Common Road, and therefore has an important role in shaping perceptions of arrival into the town centre.

The site is triangular in form and bounded by Walden Road (as the Ring Road)to the south and west, Princess Street to the east and lower-scale residential development to the north, including The Garden House. The northern boundary contains a Grade II listed garden wall associated with Lawrence Court, together with mature trees protected by virtue of their location within the Conservation Area. Additional established trees are present along the northern and eastern boundaries.

The proposals comprise two five-storey residential blocks linked by deck-access walkways, with separate lift and stair cores serving each building and a further spiral staircase positioned between the blocks. The northern block runs parallel to the existing footpath (to the rear of the bus station) and listed wall, whilst the southern block runs parallel to Princess Street.

Scale and massing

Within Huntingdon taller development has been accommodated along sections of the Ring Road corridor. These are generally located on peripheral sites where buildings address larger highway spaces and sit within a broader urban context (e.g. Pathfinder House - 4 storeys, Keyworth Court, Dilley's Court, Hawkins Court and Huntingdon Law Courts - 4 and 5 storeys).

The southern block is positioned close to the back edge of the footway and directly faces the lower-scale historic townscape of The Walks East, where development is predominantly two storeys in height. As a result, the proposal would introduce an abrupt and poorly resolved transition in scale, creating an overly dominant relationship that risks overwhelming the established character of Princess Street and The Walks East within the Conservation Area.

Particular concern remains regarding the absence of any meaningful evidence and contextual analysis demonstrating how the proposed building heights have been derived. Officers were advised that height studies have been undertaken and would accompany a future Design and Access Statement. This is considered fundamentally too late within the design process. Height, massing and townscape impact are primary design considerations and should form part of the pre-application assessment rather than post-rationalisation of a preferred scheme.

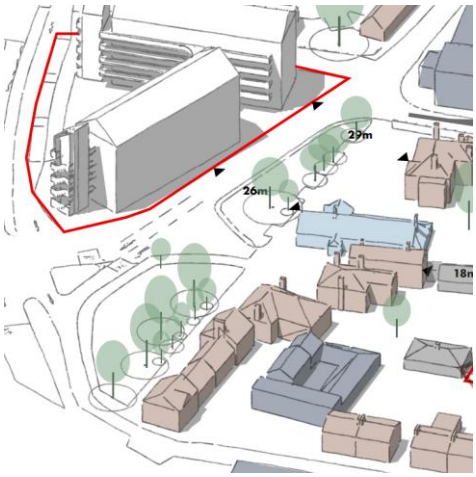
Furthermore, the proposed five-storey height of the northern block is likely to result in significant overshadowing of south-facing accommodation within 1.5 storey The Garden House and south-facing rooms within the southern 3 storey element of Keyworth Court. The submission is not supported by any scaled site plans, site sections or daylight or sunlight analysis to demonstrate that acceptable levels of residential amenity would be maintained for existing occupants.

Whilst there may be scope for limited taller development adjacent to Walden Road and the Ring Road corridor, a more sensitive approach would see development step down towards Princess Street, creating a coherent transition between the larger-scale development associated with the Ring Road and the finer-grain, more intimate character of the adjoining historic townscape.

As currently proposed, the scale and massing of the development are insufficiently justified and fail to demonstrate a context-led design response. The proposal therefore raises concerns in respect of Local Plan Policies LP11, LP12(a), (b) and (c), and LP14.

3D pre-application views showing scale difference with Princess Street:





The scale of the blocks should be tested as part of a series of 3D views taken from various viewpoints along Princess Street, The Walks East and wider views from Pathfinder Link Road, Mill Common Road, Malthouse Close and Mill Common itself. Officers encouraged that a 3D pdf model of the proposals be provided as part of the pre-application submission to allow further review and understanding of building heights.

Layout and Townscape Impact

A key characteristic of the existing site is the visual connection between Princess Street/ The Walks East and Mill Common. Despite the site's current use as a transport interchange, it provides important views towards green space and contributes to the sense of openness at the edge of the historic centre (being formally part of Mill Common prior to the ring road and bus station).

The arrangement of the two blocks, coupled with their significant scale and the narrow gap created between them (as well as the spiral stairs), risks substantially eroding this visual relationship. This would directly conflict with the Landscape and Townscape SPD objective of maintaining and enhancing physical and visual connections to important open spaces.

The proposal currently appears to prioritise development quantum over place-making. The disposition of built form should instead respond to the site's gateway role (as a sensitive area of transition from Mill Common to the historic built form), preserving key views, improving legibility and creating stronger visual and physical connections between the town centre and Mill Common.

A fundamental reassessment of the building footprints is therefore encouraged.

View looking southwest from Malthouse Close towards Mill Common:



Trees
The northern block is positioned close to an important row of established trees located in front of the Grade II listed garden wall to the rear of the current bus station. These trees make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and form an important part of the site's setting. The canopy is tall and wide and expands over part of the roof of the current bus station building and over the footpath adjacent to the Grade II listed garden wall.

Further assessment is required to establish whether adequate root protection areas and construction offsets can be achieved. Consideration should also be given to the long-term relationship between the buildings and the retained trees, including future pressure for pruning or removal resulting from shading, branch conflict or concerns regarding maintenance.

Detailed Arboricultural information should accompany any future application, including a Tree Constraints Plan, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and details of proposed protection measures.

Appearance
The two blocks have a linear footprint with pitched roofs and feature cantilevered projecting decks and prominent mono-pitch open stair cores facing the ring road. Whilst materials have not been fully developed at this stage, the 3D views contained within the pre-application submission indicate predominantly brick with standing seam cladding used for the 4th floor level and roof level, with bright colours and lighting used to highlight the external stairs.

Whilst the use of brick and standing seam as the principal materials is supported and would help establish continuity with some of the newer developments in the locality, there are concerns regarding the treatment of decks, stair cores and circulation elements. At present these appear as secondary structures attached to the main buildings rather than being integral parts of the architectural composition.

There are also concerns regarding the treatment of the stair cores, which are shown as highly visible elements incorporating bright colours and illuminated features. Given the site's location adjacent to the Conservation Area and its function as a sensitive transition between the historic town centre and Mill Common, this approach appears overly assertive and insufficiently responsive to its context.

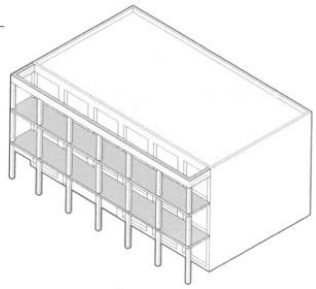
The architectural expression currently places considerable emphasis on these stair cores, resulting in circulation elements becoming visually dominant within the composition. The use of prominent colours and potential 24-hour illumination is not considered appropriate in this location and risks creating unnecessary visual prominence within both daytime and nighttime views. Whilst the site occupies a gateway location, this should be interpreted as a subtle and well-integrated gateway rather than a landmark building requiring overt architectural emphasis.

Greater emphasis should be placed on integrating these stair cores into the architectural fabric of the buildings, allowing the end elevations to form positive and active components of the overall composition. This could provide opportunities for additional habitable room windows, balconies overlooking Mill Common, or other architectural features that contribute positively to residential amenity, surveillance and townscape quality, whilst reducing the visual dominance of circulation infrastructure.

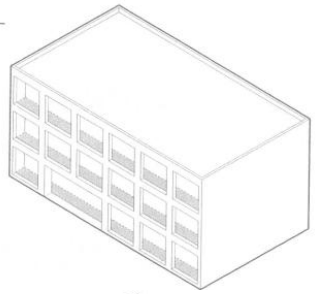
Further work is required to fully integrate circulation elements within the architecture and to demonstrate how weather protection, detailing, materiality and long-term appearance have informed the design from the outset rather than being retrofitted onto the elevations. Alternative desk designs – including supported, recessed or part screened should explored to better integrate the deck and stair cores into the elevations.

Examples of these deck types as illustrated in the Deck Access Housing Design Guide: A Return to Streets in the Sky 2024:

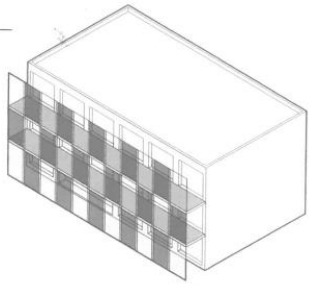
Supported decks involve posts or columns located at or towards the external edge of the projecting deck, reducing or removing the cantilever effect. The posts or columns may form a complete visual frame sitting in front of the main building façade.



Recessed decks sit behind the main building façade and in front of a secondary inner façade. The outer façade will usually have large openings to provide adequate light and ventilation to the deck and apartments facing it. Its relative visual importance may be signalled by the material choice and the proportions and regularity of openings.



Screened decks could be projecting or supported (but rarely recessed), with the addition of ventilated screens over some or part of the openings. The practical purpose is to provide shading or to provide privacy for residents or to reduce overlooking from the deck toward opposite neighbours – or a combination of all three. Screens may also be partly or entirely used for decorative purposes or to provide a greater sense of safety at height.



The provision of direct access to ground floor units fronting the footpath to the northwest of the northern block, adjacent to the Grade 2 listed garden wall is strongly supported, and provides opportunity for activity and surveillance onto this important footpath connection. Private thresholds are proposed on the south side of this block at ground floor level beneath the first floor decks – these are supported in principle and boundary landscaping and railings should be used to ensure these remain usable.

Ground floor units in the southern block have front entrances on the west (deck) side and private thresholds on the east side – these private thresholds are located in close proximity to Princess Street and are likely to be subject to traffic noise limiting their use. A greater setback between the southern block and Princess Street should be explored to provide space for defensible threshold planting and tree planting.

There is also concern that the proposed cycle and refuse storage arrangements create inactive frontage along a prominent section of Princess Street. Alternative arrangements should be explored to maintain active frontages and improve the appearance of this highly visible corner of the site.

Malthouse Close – Public Realm Improvements:

The Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan highlights the lack of clear public realm linkages between the bus station and the town centre. Opportunities to improve visual connections between the ‘Gateway’ site, bus

laybys and the High Street via Literary Walk that runs alongside Commemoration Hall should be explored though:

- Improved footpath connections – particularly widening of the footpath on the north side of Malthouse Close where it narrows adjacent to the former Waitrose roof top Car Park access ramp
- Shared surface principles / high quality surface treatments, prioritizing pedestrian connections
- Crossings over Princess Street – responding to the east-west desire line.
- Reduce the junction radii at Malthouse Close to increase public realm, improve pedestrian priority and slow vehicle speeds (subject to understanding of relocated taxi rank provision as taxis use this wide bell mouth to turn around).
- Consider opportunities to demolish sections of wall to the rear of Commemoration Hall to further improve the legibility of this route.

Proposed Bus Shelters
The proposals include a series of arched canopies adjacent to the three proposed bus lay-bys. The design rationale for these structures should be clearly explained, including how they relate to the wider architectural concept for the site and their contribution to the townscape.

It is also unclear whether these canopies are intended to provide enclosed waiting facilities, real-time passenger information, toilets and other passenger amenities currently available within the existing bus station. The quality, comfort and convenience of waiting facilities are important factors in encouraging public transport use and should not be diminished as part of any redevelopment proposals.

More generally, the bus shelter proposals cannot be considered in isolation from the wider question of bus station provision within Huntingdon. As set out previously, the submission does not yet demonstrate how bus services, passenger facilities, layover requirements and interchange functions will be accommodated across the town centre. Consequently, the acceptability of the proposed shelters is intrinsically linked to the need for a comprehensive and deliverable town-wide bus strategy that demonstrates equivalent or enhanced public transport provision compared with the existing arrangement

Conclusion
The redevelopment of the Bus Station site offers a significant opportunity to improve an important gateway area into Huntingdon and deliver new housing in a sustainable town centre location. However, substantial concerns remain regarding the proposed scale and massing, the impact on key views towards Mill Common, the relationship with the surrounding historic townscape and the overall integration of the deck-access typology.

Further design development, supported by detailed townscape, heritage and Arboricultural analysis, is required before it can be demonstrated that the proposal responds positively to its context and satisfies the relevant design objectives of the Local Plan and adopted SPD guidance.

Huntingdon Zone 2 - Princess Street Car Park

This site comprises two adjacent sites, being Princess Street Car Park and Cowper House (Grade II*) with its large rear curtilage. They are currently separated with a boundary wall/ fence covered in Ivy. Access to the car park is via Malthouse Close, whereas vehicular access to the carpark at the rear of Cowper House on the former gardens is via a narrow access between Hunts Society for the Blind No 8, and No 1-6 St Marys Court apartments on St Marys Street. A pedestrian and cycle link connects the Princess Street car park with St Marys Street along the access track which provides permeability across this part of the town.

Plans show the loss of three trees from the site – details of these should be confirmed as part of an AIA with input required from the HDC Arboricultural officer.

Layout, Movement and Connectivity
Two linear 3 storey pitched roof blocks arranged at acute angles to the southern and western boundaries are proposed over the larger combined site. Comments regarding the amalgamation of the rear curtilage of Cowper House into the adjacent site are deferred to heritage colleagues.

Plans show a small car park (9 spaces) accessed from St Marys Street via the access between Nos. 1-6 St Marys Court, and 8 St Marys Street, which also provides vehicle access to the rear of Cowper House. It is unclear if this car park is to be used by the development – if so which units would the spaces be allocated to? If this is to form replacement disabled parking – how does it compare with existing provision within Princess Street Car park and what are the accessible connections to the High Street for example?

The retention of the pedestrian connection between St Mary's Street and Malthouse Close is welcomed. However, the current arrangement creates a convoluted and indirect route around the end of the building which appears secondary to the building layout rather than informing it.

This route performs an important town centre function and should be clear, safe and legible. The present arrangement introduces unnecessary complexity and generates uncomfortable relationships with building entrances, side-facing windows and private threshold spaces.

There is an opportunity to significantly improve permeability by reducing the length of the southern block or subdividing it into smaller elements. Such an approach would improve legibility, create a stronger route hierarchy and better reflect the finer urban grain characteristic of this part of the town centre.

Bin stores appear integral to the southern building, however no information is provided for cycle parking. A large square is shown on the plan adjacent to the parking spaces – it is unknown what this is.

Scale and massing
The two blocks feature gable frontages that correspond with the plot widths of individual 1-bed apartments with double gables to block ends over the 2-bed units. A ‘chimney’ marker is proposed over the spiral staircase linking the two blocks. Overall, this creates varied and articulated silhouette as shown in the 3D views from Princess Street.

This ‘expressive skyline’ is supported in principle and reflects the varied pitched, hipped and gable forms of existing dwellings within the Walks East. However, further 3D views from Princess Street, Mill Common and St Marys Street should be prepared to understand if this varied silhouette would still be perceivable in longer distance views. This may dictate the need to introduce more variety - varied angled pitched roofs, sections of flat roof etc to help reinforce this ‘expressive skyline’ and break up the length of the blocks.

Accommodation needs to be carefully arranged to prevent overlooking impacts to rear gardens of properties within The Walks East and St Marys Street. The narrow deep plan form limits the arrangement of accommodation and means bedrooms face the decks whereas habitable kitchen/living/dining rooms overlook the southern and western boundaries with St Marys Street and Princess Street. This is likely to result in high levels of overlooking and loss of amenity.

Appearance
Materials appear similar to those used on the Bus Station development and include a predominantly brick with vertical standing seam material at 2nd floor level and pitched roof, with bright colours used to highlight the external stairs.

There is concern that the strong architectural expression of the roofscape is undermined by the horizontal emphasis created by the external deck arrangements. Rather than reinforcing the vertical rhythm of individual dwelling units, the decks visually unify the blocks and dilute the intended articulation.

Further exploration of recessed, supported or internalised deck solutions (see above) is encouraged to strengthen the relationship between the building form and the underlying residential grain.

Cowper House

The principle of bringing Cowper House into active use as part of the wider development is welcomed. Given the Grade II* listed status of the building, however, significantly more detail is required regarding the nature and extent of proposed alterations.

Notwithstanding this, the concept of using part of the larger rooms with the building to provide communal facilities for residents, including shared dining, social and leisure spaces, is supported in principle. Details of how the historic building will be used should be an integral part of the wider development concept.

Conclusion
The Princess Street proposals appear to create a stronger relationship with local scale and character than the Bus Station scheme and include a number of positive elements, including the articulated roofscape, and the proposed reuse of Cowper House.

However, concerns remain regarding the quality of movement routes, residential amenity, the treatment of deck-access circulation and the degree to which the layout responds to the finer urban grain of the historic town centre. Further design refinement is therefore required to demonstrate that the proposals fully respond to their context and deliver a high-quality residential environment.

Tebutts Road Car Park, St Neots

The proposals comprise two five-storey deck-access residential blocks accommodating 69 dwellings, arranged around a central communal courtyard. The western block fronts the site access road and pedestrian connection to Russell Street, whilst the eastern block fronts Tebbutts Road and incorporates a series of ground-floor commercial units. A separate residents' pavilion is proposed within the central courtyard providing communal facilities, including a gym, cinema, dining space and supporting cycle and refuse storage.

The site lies within the Historic Centre Hinterlands Character Area, where development is expected to improve permeability, conserve heritage significance, strengthen pedestrian connections and enhance the quality of the surrounding townscape.

The retention of around 50 parking spaces along the site's western edge is noted. However, it remains unclear how these spaces would be allocated and whether they are intended as public parking, residential parking or replacement town centre provision. This should be clarified as part of any future application.

Layout and Public Realm
The overall layout establishes a clear development structure, with active ground-floor uses facing Tebbutts Road and a communal courtyard positioned at the centre of the scheme. This approach is supported in principle.

The introduction of commercial units fronting Tebbutts Road is welcomed and has the potential to strengthen activity along the street frontage. However, there is concern that the rear elevations of these units could create inactive edges facing the communal courtyard if not carefully designed. Opportunities for dual-aspect commercial units should therefore be explored to improve activity and surveillance within the courtyard environment.

The ground-floor private threshold spaces proposed along the western block are also supported. These spaces help establish defensible boundaries between public and private areas and contribute positively to residential amenity. Details of landscaping, planting and boundary treatments should be developed further to ensure these spaces remain functional and attractive.

Communal Building
The principle of the pavilion providing shared facilities, including a gym, cinema and communal dining space, is supported and has the potential to make a positive contribution to resident wellbeing and social interaction.

However, the building also accommodates cycle and refuse storage serving both residential blocks. There are concerns that these facilities are poorly related to a number of the proposed dwellings, with units likely to be located in excess of 30m from the refuse store. This may reduce convenience for residents and could create operational and management issues over time.

Consideration should therefore be given to incorporating cycle and refuse storage within the footprint of each residential block. This would improve accessibility and provide a stronger relationship with individual dwellings.

The detailed design, appearance and operation of the pavilion should also be developed further as part of any future submission. In particular, clarification is required regarding its architectural treatment, relationship to the courtyard space, hours of use, and how the building would function as a focal point within the wider development.

Scale and Massing
The proposed five-storey development represents a substantial departure from the prevailing scale of development surrounding the site which is predominantly 2 and 3 stories.

Whilst taller buildings may be capable of being accommodated in selected locations within St Neots, the submitted material does not adequately demonstrate why this scale of development is appropriate in this location or how it responds positively to its context.

The ZTV information confirms that the buildings would be visible from a wide range of public viewpoints, including important approaches into the town and open spaces associated with the river corridor to the northwest. In these views, the development would form a prominent and potentially dominant component of the skyline, undermining the existing landmark buildings of the Maltings, Paines Mil, St Neots Parish Church and Church of St. Mary and views to them.

The issue is not simply one of visibility but of proportionality. The proposed scale significantly exceeds that of surrounding residential neighbourhoods and risks appearing isolated and incongruous rather than integrated within the townscape.

Further evidence is required to justify the proposed height and to demonstrate that lower alternatives have been fully explored.

Residential Amenity
The relationship between the proposed deck access arrangements and neighbouring properties in Russell Street raises significant concerns.

Whilst acceptable separation distances may potentially be achieved, the scale difference between the proposed five-storey blocks and neighbouring two-storey dwellings is substantial. The issue is therefore not solely one of technical compliance but also of perceived overlooking, visual dominance and enclosure.

The elevated deck-access arrangement as well as the exposed stair core on the east elevation may further intensify these concerns by increasing opportunities for views into neighbouring gardens and private outdoor spaces within Russell Street and Huntingdon Street. Future submissions should clearly demonstrate that neighbouring residents would retain an appropriate level of privacy and residential amenity.

Architectural Approach
Latest 3D views shows the front elevation of the eastern block, facing Tebbutts Road would feature a “crinkle-crangle” frontage. Whilst creating a local design narrative is supported in principle, the relationship between the proposed form and its historic references currently appears superficial and insufficiently convincing (noting that many of the precedent images are from large country estates with curved walls).

More significantly, the resulting façade composition creates extensive areas of blank brickwork facing when viewing the building looking east from Tebbutts Road (see below). These dead elevations risk creating an overly defensive and inactive street edge which would undermine the contribution the development could make to the public realm.

Tebbutts Road Looking East:



These projections require further enhancement to break up the expanse of unmitigated blank brickwork. As raised in the pre-application meeting, opportunities for private amenity space should be explored and it was suggested that these angled projections could be used to incorporate integral balconies – providing shade to internal rooms whilst also enlivening the façade and providing views east and west along Tebbutts Road, whilst also create activity a first floor and above.

Deck Access and Circulation
The arrangement of circulation cores raises particular concerns - the eastern block serves approximately 10 units per floor, whilst the western block serves 8. Combined with the location of the stair cores and connecting deck arrangements, this results in residents walking past a relatively high number of front doors to reach their own accommodation.

This approach has implications for privacy, security and residential amenity and risks creating overly busy access routes. Consideration should therefore be given to introducing more centrally located vertical circulation cores thereby reducing the number of units served from individual deck sections. This would create shorter and more intimate circulation routes.

Such changes would better reflect the principles set out in the deck-access housing guidance and improve the quality of the residential environment.

Trees and Landscaping
The retention of existing trees along the Tebbutts Road frontage is strongly supported. These trees contribute positively to the character of the street and provide an important landscape setting for the development. The introduction of additional planting and integrated seating areas is also welcomed and has the potential to create an attractive spill-out spaces associated with the proposed commercial units.

Further information will be required regarding servicing arrangements to ensure that commercial activity can be accommodated efficiently without compromising landscaping or pedestrian footpaths.

Conclusion
The Tebbutts Road proposals present a coherent development concept and include a number of positive features, including active street frontages, retained landscaping and a strong emphasis on communal facilities. However, significant concerns remain regarding the justification for the proposed height, the relationship with neighbouring properties, the quality of the deck-access arrangement and the treatment of key elevations.

Further design development, supported by detailed townscape analysis, residential amenity testing and architectural refinement, is required before it can be demonstrated that the scheme responds appropriately to its context and delivers a high-quality living environment.

St Ives Cattle Market

The Cattle Market site occupies a highly prominent and strategically important position within St Ives town centre and forms a key component of the Town Centre East regeneration area identified by the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan. The site currently accommodates significant public parking provision, bus station infrastructure and one of the principal arrival points into the town centre. As a result, its redevelopment must be considered as a comprehensive town centre regeneration project rather than solely a residential development opportunity.

The proposals comprise two principal development parcels:

Zone 1 – Bus Station Car Park

- A four-storey L-shaped mixed-use block containing 63 dwellings.
- Ground-floor commercial uses fronting a new public space adjacent to the bus station.

Zone 2 – Harrison Way Car Park

- Two parallel three-storey residential blocks accommodating 82 dwellings.
- A central landscaped courtyard between the blocks.

The site lies within the Station Road Character Area of the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD, where development is expected to improve town centre gateways, protect important landscape features, reinforce local character and retain key community infrastructure. Policy SI1 and related guidance within the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan similarly emphasise the need to improve connectivity, strengthen public realm, support active frontages and maintain the site's role as an important town centre destination.

The submitted proposals begin to address some of these objectives through the introduction of active ground-floor uses, new public realm and residential development. However, important questions remain regarding the future operation of the bus station, replacement parking and cycling provision, pedestrian connectivity and the delivery of a genuinely distinctive gateway into the town centre.

A clearer explanation is therefore required demonstrating how the proposals contribute towards the wider Town Centre East vision and respond to the design principles established within the adopted planning framework.

Appendix A – Town Centre East Design Study Design Principles June 2024:



Section 5.0 The Cattle Market Site states *"Key decisions in the redevelopment of the Cattle Market site will be the amount of parking that needs to be re-provided and the layout of the bus station and routes. In addition to meeting the objectives of the Design Principles, any proposals for the Cattle Market site should address the principles set out in*
the Cattle Market Site Development Framework plan (Fig 20) by:

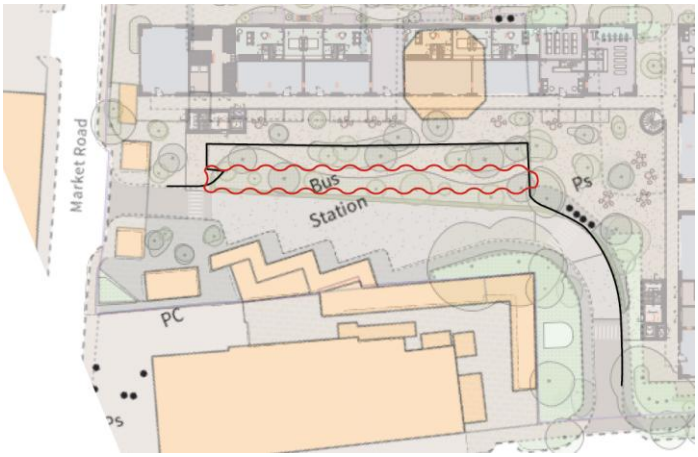
- *Creating a gateway (A) at the Station Road/Harrison Way junction that links the Park and Ride to Station Road and is an attractive and easily navigable pedestrian entrance to the town centre.*
- *Providing a public realm (B) and sense of place connecting Station Road to Market Hill and linking the Gateway (A) into the town centre.*
- *Creating a northern ped/cycle entrance (C) into the Cattle Market site as part of the Warner's Park loop.*
  - *Improving links south to the waterfront (D) through signage, public realm design and encouraging active street uses on the corners.*
  - *Designing for positive street frontages and uses (E) to Station Road and Market Road.*
  - *Planning for the retention and integration of heritage assets (F) including the gateway structures and the Octagon building.*
  - *Retaining tree belt (G) along Harrison Way as a landscape buffer and green infrastructure and biodiversity asset to link into the wider green infrastructure network.*
  - *Improving the existing public toilets including the provision of a changing places toilet facility.*
  - *Protecting and integrating trees of value within the site (H).*
  - *Protecting of the setting and character and setting of the Cromwell Place buildings and associated open space (I).*
  - *Providing for continuation of The Pavement/Market Hill character into Station Road (J) to reinforce the connection to the high street, with provision for the inclusion or replacement of The Hyperion block and stalls."*

St Ives Zone 1 – Cattle Market (Bus Station) Car Park

Bus Station Function

The proposals remove existing layover facilities and appear to reduce the width of access routes serving the bus bays (see area highlighted red below). Insufficient information has been provided to understand how the revised layout would accommodate existing services, future growth, operational flexibility or day-to-day bus movements.

Detailed vehicle tracking information is required to demonstrate that buses and coaches can safely enter, manoeuvre and depart from the station without operational constraints. Based on the information currently available, there is concern that buses may be unable to pass one another once vehicles are occupying the bays, potentially affecting efficiency and reliability.



More fundamentally, it remains unclear why the bus station has not been considered as part of a more comprehensive redevelopment strategy. Previous Council-led masterplanning work (see above) identified opportunities to incorporate built development around and alongside a series of bus laybys, creating a

stronger sense of enclosure and public realm whilst retaining transport functions. The current proposals do not explain why this approach has not been pursued.

Scale and massing
The surrounding townscape is predominantly characterised by two and three-storey development. Whilst a four-storey building may be capable of being accommodated in principle, insufficient information has been provided to understand how the proposed scale would relate to surrounding streets and spaces.

Unlike the Huntingdon and St Neots proposals, no comprehensive ZTV analysis has been provided. Additional visualisations are therefore required from key public viewpoints including:

- Market Hill.
- Station Road.
- Market Road.
- Cromwell Mews.
- Meadow Lane.

Consideration should also be given to introducing lower elements fronting Station Road and Market Road to provide a more gradual transition into the surrounding townscape and reinforce the established scale of neighbouring development.

Layout
The introduction of active ground-floor uses facing a new public space is welcomed and aligns with wider town centre regeneration objectives. The creation of activity around this space has the potential to strengthen connections between the bus station, Market Hill and the wider town centre.

However, concerns remain regarding the residential units proposed along the northern elevation. These apartments appear to be single-aspect and north-facing, raising questions regarding daylight, outlook and overall residential quality. Daylight and sunlight assessments are likely to be necessary to demonstrate acceptable living conditions.

The proposed pedestrian routes through the building are supported in principle and have the potential to improve permeability. These routes should align with existing gaps within the retained tree belt and establish stronger visual and physical connections towards St Ives Library, Waitrose and surrounding destinations. Opportunities should also be explored to improve pedestrian movement across the adjacent Waitrose car park to respond to these gaps.

The location of staff and visitor cycle parking, refuse storage and servicing arrangements for the ground-floor commercial units should be clearly identified. Future submissions should demonstrate how servicing vehicles would access and operate within the site, including details of loading, unloading, vehicle circulation and any associated waiting areas. The proposals should ensure that servicing requirements do not conflict with pedestrian movement routes, the operation of the bus station or the quality of the proposed public realm.

The Station Road frontage currently appears relatively limited given the prominence of this location. Opportunities to extend the active frontage, potentially incorporating the adjacent scout and guide hall site alongside replacement community facilities, should be explored to create a stronger and more consistent street edge.

Architectural Appearance
The pre-application submission shows the long elevations would be broken up into a series of bays – expressed by a mixture of flat roofs, pitched and gable frontages in response to the varied frontage within Market Hill. Whilst this approach is supported in principle, there is concern the vertical emphasis is lost on the front elevation given the arrangement of the deck access. As with the Huntingdon proposals, supported or recessed deck types (see above) may reinforce this vertical emphasis and break up the horizontal form of the decks.

The 3D massing images show the stair cores form dominant elements facing the bus station, these will be visible in views from Market Hill above the single store bus station/ Hyperion antiques / Coral Betting Office. Consider opportunities to internalise these as part of the buildings.

Furthermore, typical upper floor plans (as contained in the first pre-application submission) shows 21 units per floor level – the positioning of the external stair cores means future residents would walk past a high number of units to access front doors and could would result in amenity impacts. Internalising the core mid point within the floor plans should be considered.

Conclusion
Zone 1 has the potential to make a positive contribution to the regeneration of the Town Centre East area through the introduction of active frontages, new public realm and additional housing. However, the future operation of the bus station remains insufficiently resolved and represents a significant concern.

Further work is also required to justify the scale of development, improve residential quality, strengthen pedestrian connectivity and ensure that the architecture responds positively to its highly prominent town centre location. Until these matters are addressed, it has not been demonstrated that the proposals fully satisfy the objectives of the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan, Town Centre East Design Study or wider design policy framework.

St Ives Zone 2 – Harrison Way Car Park

Zone 2 comprises two parallel three-storey residential blocks arranged on a north-south alignment to the east of Cromwell Terrace. The blocks are centred around a communal landscaped courtyard and form the second phase of the wider Cattle Market redevelopment proposals.

Scale and Neighbour relationships
The proposed scale of development within Zone 2 appears broadly capable of being accommodated on the site in principle. However, additional information is required to properly understand the relationship between the proposed blocks and the surrounding townscape context, particularly the neighbouring properties within Cromwell Terrace. Detailed cross-sections and street elevations should be provided to assess the comparative scale, massing and potential impacts on residential amenity.

Particular attention should be paid to overlooking and perceived overlooking impacts affecting neighbouring properties, especially the rear garden associated with No. 5 Cromwell Terrace.

Trees
The north-eastern corner of the site lies in close proximity to a number of existing trees adjacent to Harrison Way. These trees make a valuable contribution to the character of the area and are specifically referenced within both the Landscape and Townscape SPD and the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan as important landscape assets.

The current submission does not provide sufficient information to understand the relationship between the proposed buildings and these trees. Future submissions should therefore be supported by an AIA, tree constraints plan and detailed protection measures.

Layout
The proposed central landscaped courtyard is supported in principle and has the potential to provide an attractive communal space for residents. However, the submitted plans suggest there is little direct relationship between the ground-floor accommodation and the courtyard itself. As a result, the space risks functioning primarily as a visual feature rather than the social heart of the development. The layout should be reconsidered to increase direct access to the courtyard from ground-floor units and strengthen the relationship between dwellings and communal amenity space.

There is also concern regarding the location of the standalone refuse store at the northern end of the site. This structure would occupy a visually prominent position when viewed from Meadow Lane and risks creating an unattractive and overly functional entrance to the development. Consideration should be given to integrating refuse storage within the main building footprint, allowing active residential frontage to address the site entrance and improving the overall quality of the townscape.

Furthermore, there appears to be no clearly identifiable cycle parking provision serving Zone 2, unless this is intended to be accommodated within the refuse store. The cycle parking proposed within Zone 1 is poorly related to these blocks and would not provide convenient access for future residents. Given the scale of development and the sustainable town centre location, dedicated cycle storage should be provided within or immediately adjacent to each block. Future submissions should demonstrate compliance with the cycle parking requirements of Local Plan Policy LP17 and ensure that cycle storage is secure, convenient and easily accessible for all residents.

Appearance
The approach to roof forms and articulation is supported in principle and helps break down the scale of development. The northern block at the end of the communal garden creates a 4 storey massing due to the roof form with central valley – it is recommend that this be handed with a gable thereby reducing the massing given the location to adjacent tree belt along Harrison Way, approach into the site and adjacent listed Cromwell Terrace.
However, as with the other schemes, there remains concern that the deck-access arrangement undermines the architectural rhythm of the elevations and introduces an overly horizontal character.

The scheme would benefit from a more integrated approach where circulation spaces form part of the architecture rather than appearing as externally applied elements. This would improve visual quality, strengthen identity and create a more coherent architectural composition.

Conclusion
Zone 2 appears have a more sympathetic built form in terms of scale and its relationship with the surrounding townscape. The principle of the proposed development is broadly supported, and the central courtyard has the potential to provide a strong focus for the scheme.

However, further work is required to demonstrate that neighbouring amenity is protected, important trees can be successfully retained and integrated, and that the courtyard forms a genuine focal point within the development. The treatment of deck-access circulation and refuse storage also requires further refinement.

Overall, the scheme provides a reasonable foundation for future development but would benefit from further design evolution to fully realise the opportunities presented by the site.

Recommendation:

Significant concerns are raised regarding the loss and displacement of town centre parking and bus infrastructure, the justification for building heights and massing, and the quality and functionality of the proposed deck-access housing model.

Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that replacement transport and parking provision would operate as effectively as existing arrangements, or that the proposed developments respond appropriately to their townscape, heritage and residential contexts.

Further design development, supported by comprehensive transport, parking, townscape, heritage and residential amenity assessments, is required before the proposals can be fully assessed. On the basis of the information currently submitted, compliance with Local Plan Policies LP11, LP12, LP14 and LP17, the relevant Neighbourhood Plans and adopted SPD guidance has not yet been demonstrated.

Signed: Matthew Paul & Alison Wood	**Date:** 10/07/2026