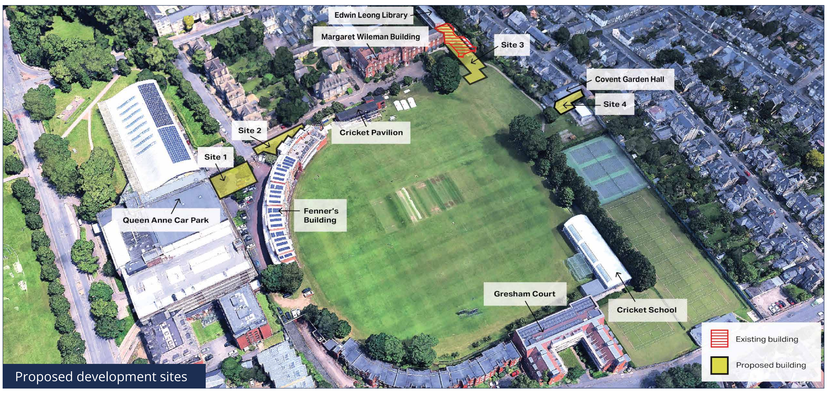
HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

WELCOME



Proposed development sites

Welcome to our community event on Hughes Hall's Estate Renewal Project.

In 2024, Hughes Hall acquired two small parcels of land on the edge of Fenner's, the Cambridge University Cricket Ground, to help prepare Hughes Hall's physical estate to meet the needs of the College in the 2030s and beyond as a centre of outstanding education and research.

The land sale has generated significant funds which the University is reinvesting to support the costs of cricket at Fenner's. This reflects the ongoing use of Fenner's as an important cricketing facility for the University and the city.

After sharing our initial development proposals, we listened to feedback from individuals, community groups and others, and used this to inform our thinking about how best to meet the current and future needs of the College and the University.

Today's event shares how the design has developed in response to feedback, introduces our plans to revitalise Covent Garden Hall and explains how you can share your feedback.

Members of the project team are available to answer your questions and hear your views - we value your ideas and input to our evolving designs.

MEET THE TEAM

FEILDEN FOWLES
Lead architect

MCW
Covent Garden Hall architect

JCLA
JONATHAN COOK LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS LTD
Landscape architect

SKELLY & COUCH
Sustainability consultant

BIDWELLS
Planning consultant
Project manager

MARENGO COMMUNICATIONS
Community consultation

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

ABOUT HUGHES HALL



Hughes Hall is the oldest graduate college at the University of Cambridge.

It was founded in 1885 as the Cambridge Training College for Women Teachers, with the aim of educating female teachers at a time when opportunities for women in higher education were limited. The College was named after its first Principal, Elizabeth Phillips Hughes, and became known as Hughes Hall in 1949.

In May 2025, we celebrated 140 years of educating women — and later men — from around the world. Today, Hughes Hall is one of only three Cambridge colleges dedicated to mature students.

The College provides a vital social, academic and pastoral support system for older, more independent students. It attracts outstanding international scholars and supports advanced education and research that helps to sustain the University's position as a global top five institution.









907 students
171 undergraduate, 736 postgraduate

Our students and Fellows come from more than 80 countries

Over 250 Fellows and senior members
from established professors directing world-class research to world leaders in business and policy

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



We are shaping the College to meet the needs of current and future students whilst considering the views and interests of our wider community who, like us, value this special place.

We recognise that you may have questions around specific areas of the emerging proposals or might just want to learn more. Over the next few months, we will be holding a series of additional drop-in events where the design team will share information about key topics and answer any questions you may have.

If you are interested in attending any of the subject specific drop-in events, please email **pavilion@hughes.cam.ac.uk** or let us know via the feedback forms here today.

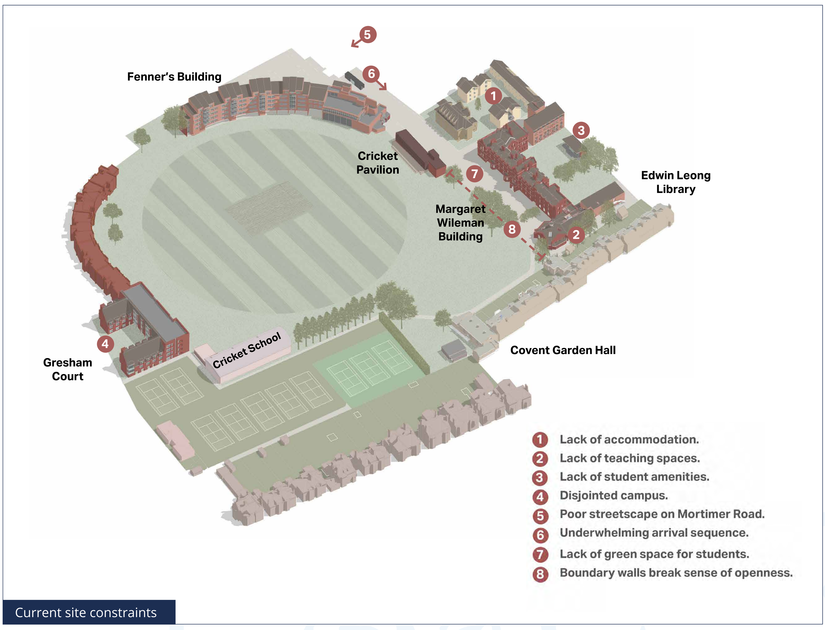
- Landscape and biodiversity
- Design and neighbourly considerations
- Covent Garden Hall and neighbour access to Fenner's

Please also let us know of any specific topics you would like to hear more about at future community events.

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

BACKGROUND TO THE ESTATE RENEWAL PROJECT



Current site constraints

Hughes Hall is an inspiring place to study, work and visit, but the campus has become increasingly fragmented, with accommodation, teaching and social areas dispersed across the site.

Guided by our lead architect, Feilden Fowles, we are developing a comprehensive plan to bring accommodation, teaching and social spaces together to create a high-quality and sustainable campus.

We plan to:

- Enhance and increase academic spaces and on-site student accommodation, so more students can benefit from a supportive community environment and reduce the need for students to rely on the private rental market in Cambridge.
- Revitalise Covent Garden Hall to create a space that can be enjoyed by the College, the local community and University Sport.
- Develop new and enhanced garden spaces for students, accessible to the College's immediate neighbours – ensuring the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Contribute to the College's goal of being net zero carbon by 2038.
- Improve the entrance to the College along Mortimer Road and Wollaston Road with a new, permanent Porters' Lodge.



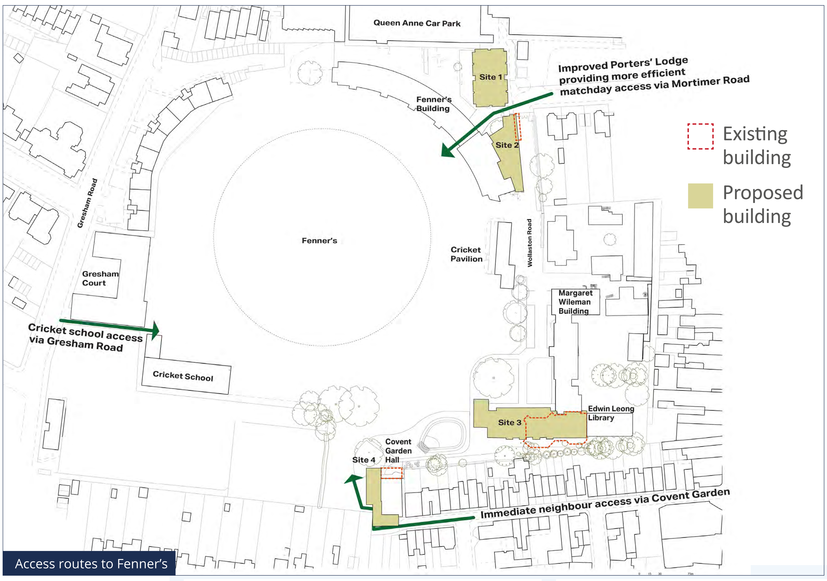




www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

INVESTING IN FENNER'S



Access routes to Fenner's

Significant funds are now available which the University is reinvesting to support the costs of cricket at Fenner's.

While the day-to-day running of the ground is not managed by us, we see an opportunity through this project to improve access for our immediate neighbours - balancing Fenner's open character with the need to maintain safety and security across the cricket ground, wider College estate and surrounding neighbourhood.

"The University Sports Service oversees the maintenance of the wicket and outfield, manages the Indoor Cricket School and ensures the pavilion, workshop and equipment remain fully operational and fit for purpose."

"Funds from the sale continue to enable the University to manage and maintain the facility which this year will see the expansion of the number of practice wickets back to original levels. The strong partnership between the University and Hughes Hall will continue to ensure that new buildings and landscaping respect the game and support uninterrupted play."

Mark Brian, Director of Sport for the University

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

PROVIDING MORE STUDENTS WITH A PLACE TO CALL HOME



Being a member of a college is at the heart of the Cambridge University experience.

For our students, Hughes Hall is a home away from home. We want more of them to benefit from the community, stability and sense of belonging that comes from living on campus.

Currently, only around a third of our students can be accommodated on campus, and unlike many undergraduate colleges, our postgraduate students stay on for much of the year, with strong demand for accommodation throughout the summer.

Investing in our estate will:

- Support students with centrally located high-quality accommodation.
- Help free up housing in the city, easing pressure on the local rental market.
- Enhance student and academic life, making it easier for students to take part in academic, social, and extracurricular activities.

"Living on-site is an indispensable part of college life at Cambridge, it is where social interactions, sporting events, clubs, tutorials, dining, studying occur just to name a few! You have a sense of community and belonging through integration and tradition, without which the collegiate experience is meaningless or significantly reduced. In my opinion it is the crucial point and strength of the collegiate system at Cambridge."

A former Hughes Hall student

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

WHAT HAS CHANGED?



Our revised proposals

After sharing our initial development proposals, we listened to feedback from individuals, community groups and others, and used them to inform our thinking on how best to meet the current and future needs of the College and the University.

As a result, key elements of the revised proposal include:

- Concentrating the majority of development adjacent to the existing Fenner's Building, on previously developed land (a brownfield site).
- Significantly reducing the building footprints within protected open space, keeping development in this area as minimal as possible.
- Reducing the footprint of the proposed building adjoining the historic Margaret Wileman Building.

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

A REVITALISED COVENT GARDEN HALL



Covent Garden Hall will be the first project to be delivered as part of a considered masterplan for the renewal of the Hughes Hall campus.

Our architect for this project, MCW Architects, is designing a proposal to revitalise a building of local significance, enhancing its functionality, accessibility and long-term sustainability, while remaining sensitive to its context.

The Hall will continue to serve as an event space and will be available for College, community, and University Sport use.

As shown in the plan above, our proposal also includes relocating the Fenner's Maintenance Store adjacent to the Indoor Cricket School. This relocation will be conducted in conjunction with the University Sports Service and the Cambridge University Cricket and Athletics Club.







www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

A REVITALISED COVENT GARDEN HALL



Hall and proposed extension

Proposed Air Source Heat Pumps

Proposed entrance

Proposed immediate neighbour access



Proposed demolition areas

Proposed demolition

The proposal is to sensitively refurbish and restore the building, remove more recent extensions that detract from its character, and introduce a new single-storey extension to create a versatile, accessible, and multi-functional event space.

The plans shown outline our concept, which will:

- Refurbish the main hall, create a new foyer and provide a small external “spill-out” space to support summer events.
- Ensure inclusive access for all users, with level access provided to the entrance via a gently graded footpath connecting to existing routes.
- Introduce a new, access-controlled pedestrian route from Covent Garden, incorporating CCTV surveillance and an intercom system linked directly to the main Porters’ Lodge.
- Retain and integrate the existing Norway Maple tree within the wider landscape proposals.
- Upgrade the original building fabric to modern standards, improving both thermal and acoustic performance.
- Remove gas heating and introduce new technologies, including photovoltaic panels, air-source heat pumps and rainwater harvesting.
- Enhance the setting of the building and deliver new, usable green space, with further detail provided under the “Increased Greening and Landscaping” section.

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

WILEMAN COURT

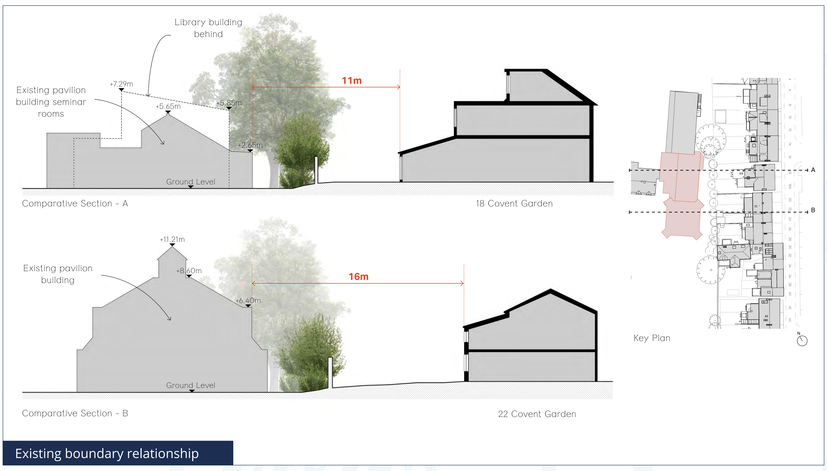
We are proposing to replace the Pavilion Building (Site 3) with a new building designed to sit comfortably alongside its Covent Garden neighbours.

The existing Pavilion Building steps up to approximately 2.5 storeys, with a lantern element that almost reaches the ridge height of the Margaret Wileman Building.

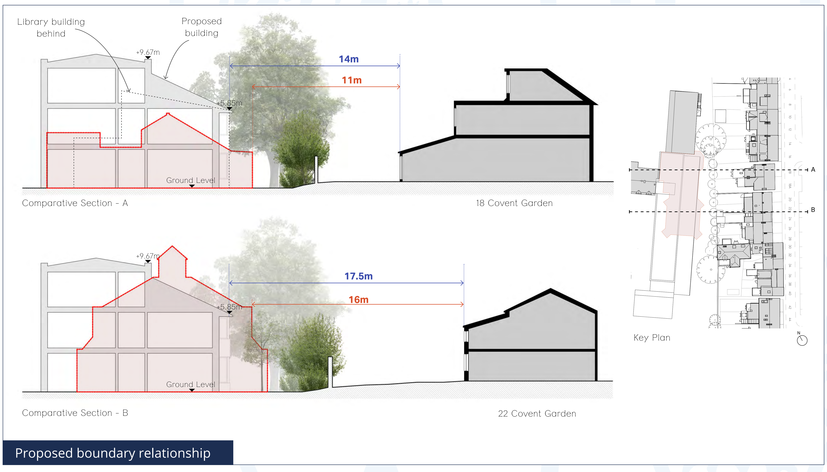
The proposals shown below illustrate the current stage of massing development. The new building is two storeys adjacent to the Covent Garden boundary, rising to three storeys on the side furthest from the boundary.

At its highest point, the building aligns with the ridge of the Margaret Wileman Building and helps define a new landscaped central courtyard.

The building is being carefully developed to protect neighbour privacy. First-floor windows will be set back behind deep eaves to prevent direct overlooking. A new landscaped garden will be created between the rear of the building and Covent Garden, planted with shade-tolerant and sensory plants.



Existing boundary relationship



Proposed boundary relationship

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

INCREASED GREENING AND LANDSCAPING



Landscape approach

Equally important are the opportunities to create new landscape areas that are welcoming and inclusive spaces for both people and wildlife – with a goal to boost on-site biodiversity by at least 20%.

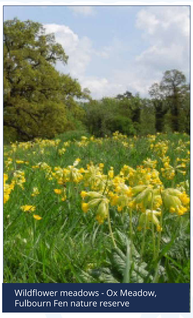
As the plan above shows, we are developing a site-wide approach that seeks to introduce a series of formal and informal garden spaces, linked across the campus. This approach will not only enhance the everyday experience for everyone but also contribute meaningfully to nature recovery.

By introducing a new access-controlled pedestrian route from Covent Garden, we would like to open these spaces to our immediate neighbours, so they can also enjoy and make use of the new garden areas.

The landscape design will respond to the character of the wider Cambridge landscape while reflecting the particular qualities and context of the site itself.

We welcome your ideas for the evolving landscape proposals, which you can share with us today or at the upcoming landscape and biodiversity drop-in event.


Visible water features - Sheep's Green & Coe Fen


Wildflower meadows - Ox Meadow, Fulbourn Fen nature reserve


Open space and wide vistas - Fenner's cricket ground


Distinctive materials & geometries - Accommodation & education buildings


Seasonal attenuation areas - Eddington, NW Cambridge


Productive orchard with heritage varieties - Girton College orchard

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Hughes Hall has appointed Feilden Fowles to lead on the development of a comprehensive plan to prepare Hughes Hall for the next generation.

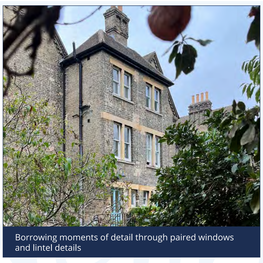
Our approach to the design of the individual buildings is still being developed and will be shared at later stages of the consultation. In the meantime, we are setting out the guiding principles shaping our proposals, which have been developed in response to feedback received to date.

Our guiding principles include:

- Delivering buildings of the highest quality that are sensitive to our neighbours and respect the scale, heritage and character of the surrounding area.
- Respecting the shared history of Hughes Hall and Fenner's.
- Carefully considering our architectural response to the Grade II listed Margaret Wileman Building.
- Responding positively to our location within both the Mill Road Conservation Area and the New Town and Glisson Road Conservation Area.
- Implementing exemplary environmental sustainability and water conservation.



Responding to the Mortimer Road Villas composition and heights



Borrowing moments of detail through paired windows and lintel details



Investigating breaking rooflines with articulated brickwork chimneys



Responding to the Margaret Wileman gable and how this may inform our proposal



Investigation into recessed arched porches to demarcate main entrances



Articulation of the parapet line brings interest and breaks down horizontality

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes

HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

THANK YOU



Thank you for visiting us today, we hope you found it interesting.

Please spend a few minutes giving us your views by completing a feedback form. Your input and ideas are valuable as we take forward our designs.

By hand: put your completed form in the feedback box provided, or hand to a member of the team

Post: use the Freepost envelope provided, or send direct to Freepost CONSULTATION REPLY (no further address or stamp required)

Email: pavilion@hughes.cam.ac.uk.

Online: visit www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes/feedback to complete an online form

Phone: 0800 689 5209

The consultation is open for your feedback until Monday 16 February 2026 (midnight).

What happens next?
Over the coming months, we will be developing our proposals into detailed designs. We will come back to you regularly throughout the design process to provide updates on our plans and to hear your comments. We will provide updates via the project website, or by email if you have chosen to share your contact details with us.

Consultation timeline

January / February 2026
First full consultation meeting

February 2026
Topic specific drop-in

March 2026
Covent Garden Hall planning application submission

March/April 2026
Topic specific drop-in

Late May 2026
Second full consultation meeting

Summer 2026
Submission of main campus planning application

www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/renewing-hughes