Summary of Discussion by Location

Cambridge Public Local Inquiry 13th November 1959

Summary of the fourth day's proceedings, based on the AI-generated transcript, Version 4, covering original pages 216–279. Each paragraph distinguishes the arguments made from decisions: this document records no final ruling on the proposals. Page references refer to the original inquiry transcript.

This summary was prepared using AI. Names, figures and quotations should be checked against the original where precision is required.

Lion Yard redevelopment area

Burrows argued that the area should be acquired and redeveloped as a single unit because its narrow streets, ageing buildings and inefficient use of central land required coordinated planning. The scheme would combine a pedestrian shopping precinct, parking, off-street servicing, new roads and a library site. He favoured one continuous building operation, progressing from the south towards Petty Cury so replacement shops could become available before existing premises were demolished. Squibb and Gale accepted the need to redevelop the back land, but disputed extending the area to the Petty Cury frontage. The authorities defended that extension as essential to a successful, connected scheme. (Original pp. 218–220, 226, 262, 272–279.)

Lion Hotel

The owners opposed demolition and compulsory acquisition of the main hotel. Squibb, supported by Gale and Barr, stressed its age, character, University connections, association with the first meeting of the Union Society, busy function rooms and value to Cambridge life. Barr corrected the report's outdated bedroom figure of 44 to 57, said the rooms were generally full and denied declining hotel business. He maintained that

wartime and post-war licensing restrictions, followed by planning uncertainty, had prevented major improvements; extension towards the south and conversion of the frontage to shops remained possible. Scarman emphasised poor rear access, obsolete drainage, damp and difficult fire-fighting arrangements, and the absence of major improvements since the family's acquisition in 1936. Gale accepted several physical defects but thought substantial expenditure could prolong the hotel's useful life. Squibb argued that inclusion had been driven by economic advantage rather than the statutory planning grounds; Scarman rejected this and defended its inclusion as part of a sound overall plan. (Original pp. 236, 241–243, 249, 260–273, 275–279.)

Lion Hotel rear land and St Tibb's Row frontage

Gale proposed drawing a boundary along the prolongation of the existing car park's north-western boundary, removing the hotel's southern appendage to create a more workable redevelopment site and a rear service road. He would advise the owners to accept that loss if the main Petty Cury frontage were excluded. Barr confirmed that the family was prepared to concede some further rear land and did not wish to obstruct redevelopment. The dispute therefore centred on the main hotel and frontage, rather than preserving every part of its ownership. (Original pp. 260–261, 264, 271, 277.)

Petty Cury south side

The authorities argued that the shops were generally too shallow, awkwardly adapted and inadequately serviced for such an important shopping street. Comprehensive redevelopment would provide better premises, rear deliveries, wider pedestrian space and strong links to the new precinct. Squibb and Gale replied that age did not make usable shops obsolete: the plots followed an appropriate historic street pattern, shop depth depended on the trade, vacancies were quickly filled, and improvements could be made incrementally. Gale also challenged the report's implication of low development intensity, calculating a frontage floor-space figure higher than the area to

the north. Squibb maintained that the statutory grounds of bad layout or obsolete development had to be established independently of the desire for a more profitable or attractive scheme. No decision on that dispute is recorded in this day's proceedings. (Original pp. 238–258, 262–268, 272–279.)

Petty Cury pavements and carriageway

Burrows described pavements averaging about three feet six inches, with shoppers forced into a street carrying buses and other traffic. He advocated setting back the ground floors on the south side to form an arcade. Bebbington thought the existing street should already be closed to ordinary wheeled traffic, but said better pedestrian space and rear servicing would make closure less imperative. Squibb and Gale accepted that the pavements were too narrow, while arguing that shopfront setbacks and possible traffic exclusion weakened the case for demolishing an entire frontage. (Original pp. 219–220, 233, 250, 257–258, 263.)

Heffer's bookshop and the Heffer block

Heffer's was used both as an example of improvement without wholesale redevelopment and as a test of the authorities' reasoning. Squibb pointed to its recessed shopfront as a practical way to let window shoppers stand clear of the narrow pavement. He also noted that the excluded Heffer block had a similarly irregular roof pattern, challenging the use of a roof plan to establish bad layout elsewhere. Gimingham accepted the local benefit of the setback but considered it much smaller than the proposed arcading, and said his plan illustrated the wider problems of adapted buildings. A suggested vista beside Heffer's was discussed, but Gimingham did not present that alone as justification for demolition. (Original pp. 247, 250, 263.)

Boots and the recessed tailor’s shopfront

Boots on the north side of Petty Cury and an unnamed tailor represented by Mr Glover were cited as further examples of recessed shopfronts. Squibb and Gale used them to support gradual improvement of pedestrian conditions while retaining buildings. Gimingham acknowledged a small advantage, but maintained that these individual alterations could not provide the benefits of a coordinated arcade and comprehensive redevelopment. The tailor’s business was not identified by name in this discussion. (Original pp. 250, 263.)

Falcon Yard and Alexandra Street

These narrow passages were central to the argument over whether the existing frontage could be retained. Earlier plans preserved them as pedestrian links from Petty Cury, with servicing provided separately from a proposed rear road. Squibb and Gale argued that their continued use, combined with another principal link and rear servicing, could connect the new precinct without comprehensive frontage demolition. Gimingham regarded them as unsatisfactory vehicle accesses because a single vehicle could block them and vehicles could not pass. Gale acknowledged that the two passages were insufficient by themselves, but thought they could contribute to an adequate combined pedestrian system. Alexandra Street is also called Alexandra Road in part of the evidence. (Original pp. 240, 246–248, 255–256, 264, 266–267.)

St Tibb’s Row

The diagonal course of St Tibb’s Row was accepted in questioning as an impediment to a satisfactory new layout of the back land. Squibb treated it as the principal layout defect there; Gimingham said it was one of several problems, alongside narrow and inadequate streets. Its role in the agreed need to redevelop the back land did not, in Squibb’s argument, establish that the Petty Cury frontage also had to be demolished. (Original pp. 246–247.)

Post Office Terrace and the former Post Office site

The Corporation's existing holdings included the old Post Office and Alexandra Street. Post Office Terrace appeared in alternative arrangements for servicing retained Petty Cury shops: a rear road could link to it, with a yard and short trolley carries where direct access was impossible. Gale considered such an arrangement adequate; Gimingham argued that the earlier proposals would satisfactorily serve only some existing shops and mainly the new blocks. These alternatives were important to the owners' contention that better servicing did not require taking the whole frontage. (Original pp. 218, 240, 255–256, 264.)

St Andrew's Church and the eastern Petty Cury link

A pedestrian connection beside St Andrew's Church was discussed as the main link between the established shopping centre and the proposed precinct. The chronology and appearance of this access in different early plans were questioned. Gale considered that a link at this eastern end, supplemented by Falcon Yard and Alexandra Street, could provide adequate integration while preserving most of Petty Cury. The authorities maintained that stronger integration with the frontage as a whole was necessary for the scheme's success. The church itself was not the subject of a demolition proposal in this discussion. (Original pp. 241–242, 267, 274.)

Lion Yard car park

The existing surface park accommodated about 220 cars; the proposed development provided roughly 730 spaces, including about 500 for the public and 230 for occupiers. Bebbington noted that this exceeded the Ministry of Transport's normal 400-space guideline for built-up areas, but accepted the larger provision as necessary for the development. He thought the improved immediate access roads could carry its traffic, while warning that vehicles still had to negotiate congested approach streets. Controlled street parking would be needed to make motorists use the parks. Squibb

established that a car park could be provided without acquiring the whole Petty Cury frontage. Barr also recalled the hotel owners' pre-war underground parking scheme and the Corporation's acquisition of their car park land in 1948. (Original pp. 221, 228, 231–232, 238–239, 272.)

Public and reference library

Burrows identified securing a site for a rebuilt public library and reference library as one of the Corporation's reasons for coordinated acquisition and redevelopment. The library was one component of the wider scheme rather than a separately examined building proposal in this day's evidence; its detailed design and accommodation were not debated here. (Original p. 219.)

Proposed replacement hotel

The suggested new hotel of about 80 or 90 bedrooms was contrasted with retaining and extending the Lion. Barr argued that the existing hotel could reach that size at substantially less cost, citing advice that new hotel bedrooms would cost over £3,000 each and accepting a total near £300,000 for a new hotel. Squibb also argued that a new building could not replace the established hotel's character and associations. Bebbington warned that traffic depended on the quality and attraction of the eventual hotel, tentatively suggesting 100–200 extra cars for a good hotel rather than a firm prediction. (Original pp. 231, 270, 273.)

Proposed University accommodation and tower blocks

Bebbington said the traffic consequences of new University accommodation were difficult to assess without knowing its scale and occupancy; he used hypothetical figures rather than a settled forecast. Gale opposed the three tower blocks shown in the developers' outline and feared that a unified design would damage Cambridge's varied central character. Under questioning he accepted that the statutory proposals

themselves did not settle those architectural details and that successful design could address his concerns. The University's own case was scheduled for a later sitting and is not contained in this document. (Original pp. 231, 268–269, 279.)

Corn Exchange Street and New Guildhall Street

The revised approach abandoned New Guildhall Street as a principal traffic and shopping road through the development, relying instead on widening Corn Exchange Street for traffic and car park access. Burrows had consistently opposed a road through the site and produced an alternative scheme without it. Squibb used the earlier schemes, which also retained most of Petty Cury, to question why frontage acquisition later became necessary. Gimingham said the plans had evolved as advice and detailed consideration progressed. Corn Exchange Street's existing narrowness was also advanced as part of the area's layout problem. (Original pp. 228, 239, 246–247, 259–260, 274.)

New Emmanuel Street and Downing Street

New Emmanuel Street remained part of the revised proposals. Bebbington expected it to improve access from the Hills Road direction and relieve the difficult Downing Street junction with St Andrew's Street. He nevertheless distinguished improvements within the scheme from continuing congestion on the wider routes feeding it. Burrows treated securing the new road as one of the reasons for comprehensive acquisition. (Original pp. 219, 228, 232, 239.)

St Andrew's Street between Emmanuel Street and Christ's Lane

A recent large redevelopment here was cited as a comparison in the dispute over Cambridge's character. Gimingham argued that Cambridge had already experienced substantial changes, including large interventions by colleges, rather than evolving solely through small individual rebuilding projects. Squibb replied that treating the

whole centre in that fashion would fundamentally alter its character. Both the suitability of a unified Petty Cury frontage and the importance of sensitive design were explored through this comparison. (Original p. 249.)

Market Place and Market Hill

Market Hill's arcade was cited by Gimingham as an example of the pedestrian benefits of coordinated redevelopment. Gale used the modern unified frontage in the Market Place as a warning that a single large building could stand apart from the surrounding historic character. Market Hill was also mentioned as a market where cars could park when space allowed, rather than counted as one of the two principal existing central car parks. These references supported competing views of design and pedestrian improvement rather than a fresh proposal for Market Hill. (Original pp. 221, 250, 262.)

Market Street and Green Street

Burrows described delivery vehicles obstructing Market Street, sometimes standing partly on the pavement, despite a few shops having rear access from Green Street. The example supported his general case for off-street loading and unloading in the Lion Yard scheme. Bebbington also named Market Street as part of an already congested possible approach to the development. No separate rebuilding scheme for these streets was examined. (Original pp. 222, 228.)

Sidney Street and the Sidney Street–Hobson Street block

Burrows described serious pedestrian congestion at the southern end of Sidney Street, notwithstanding pavements somewhat wider than those in Petty Cury. The block between Sidney Street and Hobson Street was also used in the written analysis as a comparison for intensive central commercial use. Squibb challenged whether such whole-block comparisons justified including a Petty Cury frontage that was already fully

used for central purposes; Gimingham said the analysis addressed the development area as a whole. (Original pp. 220, 244.)

King Street car park

Burrows presented a proposed multi-deck car park of about 265 spaces in King Street as part of a wider programme to distribute parking around the centre. The City and County were pursuing a comprehensive development procedure, and he hoped completion might be possible in about three years if objections and procedure allowed. This supported his argument that Lion Yard should be assessed alongside other planned parking provision. (Original p. 221.)

Park Street car park

The Park Street proposal was described as having passed a planning inquiry and most of a magistrates' stopping-up process, with a compulsory purchase inquiry still to come. Burrows hoped a surface park of about 110 spaces could open within twelve months if the order was confirmed, with eventual multi-deck provision for about 350 cars. The evidence concerned its expected contribution to distributed central parking, not a final approval or completion date. (Original pp. 221–222.)

New Square car park

New Square's existing capacity of about 270 cars was included in Burrows's account of central parking provision. He suggested that a future multi-storey development might accommodate perhaps four times that number, but presented this as a possibility rather than an imminent scheme. It illustrated the longer-term potential for additional parking beyond Lion Yard. (Original p. 221.)

Chesterton Bridge and the cross-city route

Burrows regarded the proposed new river crossing as a principal means of diverting cross-city traffic from the centre. He described a route from Trumpington Road through

Lensfield Road, Gonville Place and East Road, across Newmarket Road and the Cam, then towards Chesterton Road and Milton Road. Surveys and designs had been submitted and boreholes authorised, but ministerial priority and construction authority remained important. He estimated that the bridge and approach roads could take about three years once authorised. The Royal Hotel was mentioned only as a landmark near the route's southern approach. (Original pp. 222–224.)

East Road redevelopment area

Burrows said an approved redevelopment area in East Road was already entering its first rebuilding stage and would allow widening along part of the proposed Chesterton Bridge route. He also referred to enlargement of a roundabout near a proposed fire station and other junction improvements along the route. These measures formed part of his case that external road improvements would help the Lion Yard scheme function. (Original pp. 224–225.)

Four Lamps and Victoria Avenue

The small Four Lamps roundabout was described as a serious bottleneck where traffic from the expanding northern residential districts met the A45 trunk route using Victoria Avenue. Burrows sought a larger, modern roundabout, requiring land acquisition, and hoped for authority in the following financial year. Bebbington also regarded the Victoria Avenue junction with Newmarket Road as an important congestion point. The argument was that these external constraints needed attention alongside central redevelopment. (Original pp. 224–225, 232.)

Mitcham's Corner

Burrows described the five-road junction as having near-right-angle weaving movements that produced severe jams at busy times. He proposed a much larger roundabout arrangement to improve weaving and remove crossing movements, but

could not give a definite implementation date. Bebbington likewise identified the Victoria Avenue–Chesterton Road junction as a major traffic difficulty requiring improvement. (Original pp. 224–225, 232.)

Hyde Park Corner and Mill Road junction

At the Hills Road, Regent Street, Lensfield Road and Gonville Place junction, known locally as Hyde Park Corner, Burrows favoured an adequate roundabout in place of traffic signals. Bebbington described the junction as one of the major peak-hour difficulties. Burrows also expected improvements at the Mill Road corner on the same general route. Both were discussed as supporting road works that should be considered when judging Lion Yard's traffic effects. (Original pp. 225, 232.)

Trumpington Street and Pembroke Street

Bebbington identified the turn from Trumpington Street into Pembroke Street as a particularly bad junction on approaches to the development from the south and west. He stressed that widening roads immediately around Lion Yard would not remove every difficulty on the narrow streets leading to it. King's Parade and the streets around Market Square, Peas Hill and Wheeler Street were also mentioned as possible approach routes, not as separate redevelopment proposals. (Original pp. 228, 232.)

Magdalene Street, Bridge Street and the northern approaches

Bebbington used the routes from Magdalene Street through Bridge Street and the central streets to show that traffic heading to the new car park would still meet congestion outside the site. Counts for Magdalene Street showed a pronounced peak-hour concentration, especially of cycles, and he identified the street as a continuing bottleneck. The evidence favoured assessing the development within the whole city's traffic system rather than assuming its new local roads would solve every approach problem. (Original pp. 228–230, 232.)

Downing Place, Regent Street, Tennis Court Road and Fen Causeway

Bebbington thought a connection from Downing Place through to Regent Street and widening Tennis Court Road would assist traffic movement. He separately identified the Fen Causeway–Lensfield Road junction as a place where peak-hour queues already formed. These were supporting observations on the wider road network; the day's proceedings did not settle their detailed design or timing. (Original p. 232.)

Central Cambridge and the University precincts

The character of the centre framed the disagreement over wholesale redevelopment. Gale emphasised the importance of protecting the varied townscape enclosed by University and college property; the authorities emphasised the centre's market-town function as well as its University setting. Scarman argued that both identities needed to survive and that sound architectural design could reconcile improvement with character. The Chief Constable's counts in St Andrew's Street, Magdalene Street, Emmanuel Street, Trumpington Street and Silver Street showed strong commuting peaks; he expected shopping traffic mainly off-peak but office traffic to add to the peaks. Christ's College and the University were named as parties whose own cases would be heard later, not resolved here. (Original pp. 229–232, 262, 268–269, 279.)

Burlington Arcade

Squibb invoked Burlington Arcade as an outside comparison to challenge the idea that shallow shops must be obsolete. Gimingham replied that an arcade was a specialised shopping environment, whereas Petty Cury was an important general shopping street whose premises should be assessed in relation to that role. There was no proposal concerning Burlington Arcade itself. (Original p. 255.)