

# Public Forum

## D C Committee B

### 6pm on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021



#### 1. **Members of the Development Control Committee B**

**Councillors:** Tom Brook (Chair), Richard Eddy (Vice-Chair), Lesley Alexander, Nicola Bowden-Jones, Stephen Clarke, Mike Davies, Fi Hance, Sultan Khan, Olly Mead and Jo Sergeant/Chris Jackson (Role Share)



## PUBLIC FORUM

<b>A</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>20/00433/F – The Hawthorns, Woodland Road</b>
1	Councillor Kye Dudd	
2	Dominique Thompson	
3	Jonathan Coombs – Pegasus Group	
4	Hannah Armstrong – Pegasus Group	
5	Mr Barot, Headmaster – Bristol Grammar School	
6	Jeremy Bladon - CSJ Planning Consultants	
7	Adam Cossey - Partner, Hawkins Brown Architects	
8	Judith Squires - Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost, University of Bristol	
9	Lynda Hay	
<b>A</b>	<b>Statement Only</b>	<b>20/00433/F – The Hawthorns, Woodland Road</b>
10	Hamilton Caswell – Christmas Steps Arts Quarter	
<b>B</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>20/04821/X - Stoke Park, Park Road, Stapleton Bristol</b>
1	Councillors Kirk & Tincknell (Cllr Kirk to speak)	
2	Stephen Bartle	
<b>B</b>	<b>Statement Only</b>	<b>20/04821/X - Stoke Park, Park Road, Stapleton Bristol</b>
3	Mr Wilson	
4	Mr Lansdowne	
5	Mr Sheppard	
6	Richard Simpson	

7	Robert Clarke	
8	Ruth Revell	
<b>C</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>20/04645/F – 2, Alpha Road, Bristol</b>
1	Tim Buxton	
2	Eric Booth	
<b>C</b>	<b>Statement Only</b>	<b>20/04645/F – 2, Alpha Road, Bristol</b>
3	Mr Brockman	
4	Tilly Langton	



Dear DCB,

In your deliberations on this application I ask that you give very close consideration and weight up the risks around these two issues.

1. The Highways issues.

The report makes it clear that there are concerns in regards to the impact on neighbouring roads with the proposed Woodland Road point closure on . My main concerns are the impacts on St. Michaels Hill which currently already has issues that will be made worse.

TDM Report

“St Michaels Hill, on the other hand, has narrow footways, and many competing demands for road space. The road, at its narrowest section, carries in excess of 850 vehicles per peak hour at present and this will increase to over 1000 with these proposals. There have been long term concerns raised by businesses and residents near to St Michaels Hill, and the accident record shows a serious event where a pedestrian stepped into the road and was hit by a car. It is not suited to an increase in general traffic in its current state”

The report is also clear that the emerging executive policy is moving to a liveable neighbourhood approach looking at a traffic in areas rather than single locations. So A Traffic regulation order will be considered in this context, especially in regards to this proposal as the wider impact on neighbourhood roads is clearly evidenced. It is highly likely a TRO will only be authorised if its brought forward as a wider scheme. A wider scheme will obviously need to find a source of funding and take time to be drawn up and delivered even if that funding could be found.

2. Heritage/Impact on Conservation Area - Historic England Objection

Historic England objects on heritage grounds to the proposed development in its current form and massing. This is a material issue that needs to be given careful consideration by the committee the case officers view on this matter is very subjective and should treated as such.

What is clear is that the whether you like the design or not. It is the case that massing is an issue and it can only work as a design with the point closure on Woodland road. Given that a there is no guarantee that the TRO will be granted to enable this design to be built, I feel this is a key issue the committee need to give careful consideration to and weigh up the risks, which in my view are high.

Kind Regards

Councillor Kye Dudd  
Central Ward  
Cabinet Member for Transport, Energy and the Green New Deal

Statement for Bristol City Council re- The Hawthorns

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the parents of Bristol Grammar school, and I speak today in a personal capacity.

However

It may also be of note that in my professional life I was a GP and the Head of student health at the university of Bristol for many years, and I continue to spend my *professional* life supporting student mental health and wellbeing.

I am not anti-university, nor anti iconic buildings

I am **anti** increasing the risk to our children as they arrive at and leave school, and move between lessons and lunch.

The increased volume of traffic in Elton Road, the increase in air and noise pollution as well as the greater pedestrian and cyclist traffic in the area, will lead to **significant** heightened risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of our children.

The current plans do **not** value the wellbeing of the school children and the university students **equally**.

The traffic plans in particular *prioritise* the wellbeing and convenience of the university's students, and are *dismissive* of the risks to the safety of the children (some of whom are as young as 4).

These are risks that must not be ignored and overridden so easily.

Local children and university Students have an **equal** right to expect to be safe as they go about their day.

We ask you to reject the current proposal, send it back for further consideration, and insist on **equal consideration** being given to the safety wellbeing and protection of our children and the university's students.

Dominique Thompson

# Statement to Committee



## Item 8a: 20/00433/F - The Hawthorns, Woodland Road

By Jonathan Coombs of Pegasus Group

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The preservation of heritage assets is established as a high test that should be given "*great weight*" and for which any harm requires "*clear and convincing justification*". The committee as decision maker must be satisfied that they fully comprehend what the degree of harm is to each heritage asset, what the offered benefits are and crucially that these are sufficient to clearly justify the grant of planning consent against heritage harms that should be attributed 'great weight'.

Harm to heritage assets has been identified by your officers, statutory consultees and an array of local amenity groups. Your conservation officer advises that the applicant's submitted Heritage Statement underplays the resultant harm and that "no clear and convincing justification" is provided for this harm. Yet, the committee report is inadequate in detailing the harm to relevant heritage assets and reaches a differing conclusion. Key Issue D simply aggregates this assessment with no meaningful detail, while omitting some assets raised in the consultation feedback. This leaves members inadequately informed to reach a decision, which would be at risk of judicial review as a result.

The report also exaggerates the 'benefits', appearing to equate the 'University's benefit' as 'public benefit' due to its educational and economic role, without substantiating the benefits of solely *the development* to the city beyond public access to the ancillary event/gallery facilities, as well as to the library collections which is already the case. The report erroneously describes the removal of 'negative buildings' as of benefit despite your own published appraisal identifying these as 'neutral'.

The proposals diverge from the University's own agreed masterplan under SPD11. The report justifies this by focusing on why the identified location was no longer attractive, which is in large part due to divergence from the masterplan by the University through continued investment in the computer centre. Little is given to how *the application site* is suitable given the identified heritage harms. There is no justification for why a reduced scope of building could not be accommodated given the extensive cultural shift to online learning (including library access/study) under the pandemic and that the University had already reduced its preferred space demands by 50% through retention and use of alternative facilities.

Should this proposal be granted, not only will the Council be at risk of legal challenge, but it would represent a very clear indication that the University can ignore the views of local amenity groups, professional and statutory consultees and its own previously agreed masterplan with the Council. We consider that the Council should hold the University to the same standard as any other developer and respectfully request that the application be refused planning permission.

## Statement to Committee

Project Name: The Hawthorns, Woodlands Road, Bristol, BS8 1UQ  
Author: Hannah Armstrong, Associate Heritage Consultant  
Reference: 20/00433/F  
Date: 14 September 2020

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Historic England object to the proposals as a result of impacts arising to the historic environment. The Courts<sup>1</sup> have established that the advice to an LPA from a Statutory Consultee (such as Historic England) should be given 'great' or 'considerable' weight, and that a departure from that advice requires 'cogent and compelling' reasons.

The City Design Group state that the scheme is 'not acceptable in its current form' with this in part due to impacts on the historic environment.

Concerns have also been raised by other consultees and third parties, including but not limited to: The Conservation Advisory Panel, Bristol Civic Society; and The Victorian Society.

Para 193 of the NPPF states that: "*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance*"

It is acknowledged that the applicant has provided further justification with regard to why this site is being brought forward and its suitability within the context of other possible site options following the request for such information from Historic England and the City Design Group, and that your Officer is happy with the argument provided.

Nevertheless, the consideration of harm vs public benefits remains a consideration under Para 196 of the NPPF.

In this regard, it is the professional opinion of your own Officer's<sup>2</sup> that the degree of harm is considered to be at the higher end of 'less-than-substantial', with such harm applicable to all of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas identified during the determination of

<sup>1</sup> See *Shadwell Estates Ltd v Breckland DC* [2013] EWHC 12 (Admin), Paragraph 72.

<sup>2</sup> As set out within the response of the City Design Group.

the application, including highly designated heritage assets.

In terms of 'heritage benefits' to be considered under Paragraph 196, your Officer considers that "*replacing the Hawthorns with a building of exemplary design and visual interest... must be considered an enhancement to this part of the Conservation Area*", and thus represents a heritage benefit. In this regard, your Officer has not only overplayed the negative contribution made by the Hawthorns building to the Conservation Area, but entirely discounted the provisional opinion of your own Officer's views on the new building with regard to harm arising to this asset.

It is clear that the proposed development does not preserve or enhance the heritage significance of the designated heritage assets identified, and that concerns and objections have been made by your own Officer's and statutory consultees regarding this matter.

23 February 2021

Dear Councillors,

**PLANNING APPLICATION 20/00433/F - THE HAWTHORNS, WOODLAND ROAD, BRISTOL, BS8 1UQ  
SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS from BRISTOL GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

We have raised formal objections to this application, which reflect the majority view of our governors, staff, and parents. We are an inclusive school that welcomes a broad intake, from all around Bristol, especially through our successful and expanding bursary provision. Our pupils range from 4 to 18 years.

Our principal concerns relate to the safety and welfare of our pupils, arising from changes to the local highways network and increased local activity. We have additional concerns relating to impacts on the quality of our teaching environment, and on the Great Hall and other elements of our site from a heritage perspective.

Regretfully, our concerns have not been addressed by the applicant, despite our ongoing efforts to engage. We, therefore, maintain our objections in the strongest terms. We urge this Committee to reject the proposals in their current form and direct the University to work up a sensitive and neighbourly solution to their needs.

Our concerns are summarised in the following points:

- **Highways changes which impact unconscionably on the safety and welfare of children and are at complete odds with the Council's aspiration and initiatives to make streets outside schools safer and less polluted.**

These Highways changes are an unnecessary and avoidable element of the proposals. The planned changes will greatly increase traffic along Elton Road, from where pupils access our school, and across which pupils cross thousands of times per day between classrooms located on both sides of the road. Amendments to the original application, which remove general eastbound traffic on Tyndall Avenue, will push even more traffic along Elton Road. The amount of traffic diverted away from local roads is overestimated, in our informed view, and we have no doubt the position will be worse than predicted, particularly on Elton Road.

As is referenced in the planning officer's report to the Committee, the point closure of Woodland Road does not "meet the needs of the Council" and "will not bring the wider benefits desired as part of a living neighbourhood". In addition to increased traffic on Elton Road, our traffic consultant's report highlighted significant issues about the modelling of the re-assignment of traffic generally, and the expectation of additional congestion on Queen's

Avenue/Queen's Road, as well as at the junction of Tyndall's Avenue/St Michael's Hill, which will negatively impact on the wider area. As such it would be premature to permit a major development such as this (with significant effects over a large area) ahead of setting a wider transport and movement strategy.

The simple fact of the matter, however, is that the proposed closure of Woodland Road is ***an unconscionable trade-off between enhancing the safety and wellbeing of adult students and staff at the University on the one hand, at the expense of the safety and wellbeing of children as young as 4 years old on the other.***

- **Air pollution and noise pollution** – there will be an inevitable increase in noise and air pollution in the immediate vicinity of the school, to the detriment of children's health and the quality of their teaching environment. This is completely at odds with the Council's own School Streets initiative.
- **Public Realm** – The development will significantly increase pedestrian, cycle and vehicle flows in the local area. Elton Road in its current form is wholly unsuited to increased activity by all modes yet the proposals offer no improvements or mitigation, such as the widening of pavements. Such measures will be essential to safeguard not just our pupils and staff, but all who use and cross Elton Road on a daily basis, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Design, Heritage and Amenity** - We cannot support the development in its current form. It is too large, and it will have an overbearing impact on the school, its setting and wider surroundings, raising concerns in respect of both heritage and amenity. Our Great Hall is of high heritage significance and landmark status within the neighbouring Conservation Areas. The relationship between the proposed library building and the Great Hall is deeply concerning. The officer's report acknowledges that "there would be harm to heritage assets" and Members are asked to "balance the public benefits ... against the harm". We firmly believe that the public benefits of this development have been overstated and the heritage harm is not outweighed. The public benefits sought by the University can be achieved without the harm that the current scheme will have to the Great Hall and other significant buildings in the vicinity by reducing its scale and reconsidering its design.
- **Scale and Massing** – In addition to the heritage impact, the overbearing nature of the proposals will lead to overshadowing, reduced daylight/sunlight, and overlooking of play areas, clearly diminishing the quality of our learning environment.
- **Construction Phase** - We have recently been subjected to significant disruption associated with the refurbishment works to the University's Fry Building, which (as we repeatedly communicated with the university) were badly managed by the appointed contractors and breached agreed measures on a regular basis. ***We have, consequently, no faith in the University's commitment to being considerate neighbours and builders over what will be a lengthy construction project.***
- **Public Health** - COVID-19 has naturally heightened sensitivity around issues of safety and welfare. As we begin to assimilate new teaching guidelines and wider estate safeguards, the prospect of further local disruption during construction phase is deeply concerning. More importantly, a significant uplift in pedestrian and vehicle activity around our school and the

absence of meaningful mitigation and improvements to the pedestrian realm along Elton Road run counter to current public health initiatives and the Council's own measures for promoting social distancing in other parts of the City. It would be inappropriate to approve this development as currently proposed.

We have endeavoured to raise these issues with the University on a number of occasions. We have done our level best to engage in the spirit of good neighbourliness but regrettably the safety and welfare of our pupils seems to have been completely side-lined.

We trust that you will give your full consideration to the matters set out in this letter, above all those relating to child safety. It is abundantly clear to us that the adverse transport/highways-related impacts arising should not be accepted, and whilst the officer's report references the need for a TRO for the scheme to be implemented (and the potential difficulties in achieving that) we urge you not to rely on that to deal with the negative impacts of this application. There is ample opportunity for the University to meet their requirements in a sensitive and neighbourly fashion, one which avoids or mitigates the adverse impacts we have demonstrated. We urge this Committee, therefore, to demand a more sensitive approach before permission is contemplated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Barot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Mr Jaideep Barot**  
**Headmaster**

**Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns  
Statement by Jeremy Bladon, Director CSJ Planning Consultants Ltd  
Development Control Committee B, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

The application before you is the culmination of 2½ years of consultation and design development undertaken with officers, stakeholders and the public, delivered through a Planning Performance Agreement. You will have seen through the Members Briefing Pack and Members presentation that the scheme has changed and evolved in response to this consultation, which we believe has benefitted the design and proposals brought forward for the Library building itself, the surrounding public realm and the transport and movement proposals.

There is clear Development Plan policy support for this application, which is reflected in your officer's report and recommendation for approval. Both the Core Strategy and BCAP promote and direct growth of the University within the precinct and support renewal and growth. These policies are supplemented by SPD11, adopted in 2006 by Bristol City Council. The SPD contains 10 key strategic moves, 3 of which are directly relevant to this application: -

- SM9 allocates this site for redevelopment, promoting a landmark building of up to 7 storeys.
- SM6 supports improvement to the public realm in this area and strengthening the identity of the precinct through that improvement; and
- SM3 supports the creation of a new, identifiable entrance to the University precinct in this location.

Therefore, the implementation of this scheme is pivotal in achieving the aims, objectives and strategic moves laid out in the Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance.

City Design officers have stated in their statutory consultation responses that the scheme delivers an exceptional landmark building exhibiting excellence in design quality. This is mirrored by the comments made by the Bristol Urban Design Forum. Working with officers and taking account of consultation with local residents and the public at large, the public realm has been redesigned to integrate a segregated cycle way and many other suggestions. The proposals for transport and movement bring numerous benefits to pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport, in particular, buses. The redirecting of general traffic in the area will calm traffic, have minimal impact on surrounding highways, and will improve coach parking to both BGS and the University. This aligns with both current and emerging transport policy. The university welcomes the opportunity to work with officers going forward on low traffic neighbourhood initiatives and believe the proposals before you will compliment future schemes for the wider area.

The public benefits that arise from the proposals, both in terms of providing public accessibility to the building, a new civic square for the city, and the package of planning gain are considerable. The proposals do have an impact on this part of the Conservation Area, but we contend that overall, this is beneficial and that any perceived localised harm will be vastly outweighed by the public benefits that accrue.

The University has worked in consultation with BGS to assimilate benefits for the school within the proposals. The school have concerns regarding the daylight impacts on particular classrooms adjacent to the proposed Library, but a full and detailed daylight and sunlight study has concluded these concerns are unfounded.

A S106 Agreement will provide a package of benefits to surrounding residential areas via contributions towards improvements on St. Michael's Hill, a wider transport study of the area, and improved bus stop facilities. The creation of this new library at the University will provide benefits for the city's residents, as well as many of the city's institutions.

I would ask that the Committee endorse its officers' recommendation and approve this application.

**Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns**  
**Statement by Adam Cossey, Partner Hawkins\Brown Architects**  
**Development Control Committee B, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

The new University Library will transform the heart of the University's Clifton precinct and provide an architecturally significant new building for the City, along with improved external public spaces. The overarching objective is to create a world class Library at the centre of the University of Bristol that reflects the University and the City's proud tradition of academic excellence with an innovative, forward thinking spirit. The project guiding principles are:

- Supporting wellbeing - The proposal incorporates the latest innovations in design theory and practice to ensure the library best supports the wellbeing of the users.
- Inclusive and accessible - The new library space will be welcoming to all users, including the public, as an environment where diversity is valued, and everybody feels supported.
- Inspirational -The architecture will delight and inspire innovation and discovery. It will be a building with spaces that create opportunities for intellectual pursuit and elevated thinking. Maximising natural light and views has been essential to the design.
- Adaptable - The building will seamlessly adapt to new ways of learning and researching, to accommodate new technologies and services that will develop over the next 50 years and beyond.
- Built to last, sustainable - The building has been designed to meet admirable sustainability building standards and achieve BREEAM 'Excellent'. A number of passive design features have been incorporated into the building design to assist the University meeting it's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The site sits at a pivotal junction between the Whiteladies Road and Tyndall Park Conservation Areas. The Whiteladies Road Conservation Area is primarily defined as a high quality suburban area incorporating mature tree-lined streets with large, detached villas sited in generous urban plots. In contrast, Tyndall's Park Conservation Area consists of a mix of high quality 'iconic' university buildings and Bristol Grammar School's Great Hall in the Gothic Revival Style as well as a series of monolithic mid-century buildings of 6 to 7 storeys in height. The site provides an opportunity to create a new coherence to the juxtaposing areas. The key design principles informed by the context are:

- Adjustment to scale – To create a transitional building mediating between the suburban domestic and the monolithic mid-century.
- The Gateway to the Campus Heart – To enhance and signify the entrance to the university
- Address the immediate context – To sit the building within sight lines looking up from Elton Road towards Senate House and up Woodland Road from Royal Fort Gardens.
- Architectural response to sensitive context – To develop high quality and civic scaled architecture that relates to both university and city buildings of a similar nature.
- Increasing the public realm – To organise the urban legibility of the surrounding area and to provide a new extended public realm.
- Complete a trio of landmark buildings – For the building to be of such design quality that it sits proudly in the skyline as a contemporary addition within the family of iconic university buildings.

The design and massing of the Library have evolved through in depth analysis of the historic context including the Conservation Area , the need to step up the site creating a transitional building between Elton Rd and Tyndall Ave and the relationship with other towers and Listed buildings in the area. High quality natural materials are employed, a full basement level introduced during Pre Application consultation to slim the building down and exciting contemporary architectural design employed to create a landmark building.

The proposal includes a new civic square, a pedestrianised area between Senate House and the new University Library introduced to improve traffic flow and public transport, enhance the pedestrian and cycling routes, and to make the whole area safer and accessible for everyone.

Changes in response to public feedback include a fully segregated cycle lane through the civic square and better traffic management measures for coach drop off and pick up by the University and its neighbours.

**Application Number: 20/00433/F New University Library, Hawthorns  
Statement by Professor Judith Squires, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost at the University of Bristol.  
Development Control Committee B 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

A great library lies at the heart of any great university. This new university library will lie at the heart of our University education and research endeavour, supporting our core mission for the next century. The University of Bristol University needs a new library in order to retain its status as a world class institution in the sphere of both education and research. The New University Library will:

- provide world-class state-of-the-art library facilities for our staff, students and visitors, housing approximately 420,000 books, 70,000 journals and around 2,000 new study seats.
- foster the intellectual development of generations of future scholars, who will become global ambassadors for the city.
- support cutting-edge research into our most significant societal challenges.

In these ways the New University Library will secure the world-class standing of the University of Bristol for the next century. But it isn't just about the University.

The New University library will be a new cultural destination for the city of Bristol. It will:

- provide public access to the University's nationally significant cultural resources including the Theatre Collection and Special Collections. The Theatre Collection is one of the world's leading collections of British theatre history and live art, and a Designated Collection. The Special Collections is an internationally recognised collection of rare books and archives, spanning over five kilometers of materials in publishing, campaigning and medicine from the 11<sup>th</sup> century up until present day.
- offer a year-round programme of exhibitions and complementary events providing the city with a museum style café, exhibition galleries, reading rooms to explore archival and museum collections, and programmed event spaces creating new opportunities for a wide range of educational, creative and inspirational activities for student, staff and visitors, including city schools and FE colleges.
- Provide temporary exhibition spaces to accommodate a range of pre-planned, touring, and pop up exhibitions creating new opportunities to further develop established collaborations with local cultural organizations, including the RWA, the City Museum, the Georgian House, St George's, Bristol Old Vic, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, the SS Great Britain, the Tobacco Factory, Circomedia and the Festival of Ideas.

In these ways the New University Library will welcome the citizens of Bristol, and share our cultural resources with them, enabling us to enrich the lives of our diverse city-region communities.

This will be a high-quality architectural addition to the city landscape. This £100m project has been designed to the highest aesthetic and environmental standards, with a commitment to inclusiveness and openness manifest through the building's design, space requirements and the activities within.

- The library building will support wellbeing of staff, students and visitors by incorporating the latest innovations in library design, theory and practice.
- The iconic design unites the indoor and outdoor spaces, with specially commissioned public art from internationally recognised artists throughout.

Finally, this new University Library will sit in a New City Square, providing a welcoming and inspiring public realm for the whole city. This will:

- Create improved external public spaces in and around Tyndall Avenue providing the kind of environment that students, staff and members of the public will find relaxing and communal.
- The new City Square will be carefully managed to maintain a welcoming, inclusive and vibrant democratic environment for all, building on and extending the access we provide to high-quality external spaces where all are welcome, such as the Royal Fort gardens, which are already valued by a wide range of citizens in our neighbourhood.
- Create new road layouts to improve traffic flow, enhance the pedestrian and cycling routes and make the whole area enjoyable, safer and accessible for everyone

This is a once in a generation opportunity to create a world-class university library of benefit to the whole city, to create a new City Square where all are welcome.

## Planning Application: 20/00433/F

In the nearly 28 years that I have lived at my current address on St Michael's Hill and the numerous planning applications that the University has put forward to the Council over those years I have never felt more exercised to speak than I do regarding this planning application. This seems like a war of attrition to grind down the local community. I am an alumnus of the University and my old department is one of the nearest departments to the proposed new library and enhanced public realm. These two proposals should have been submitted separately. They raise different issues and affect local residents and organisations in differing ways.

I object to the creation of this so called enhanced public realm at the junction of Woodland Road with Tyndall Avenue, Elton Road and St Michael's Park, it is already a public realm and is owned by the city this is merely a vanity project and as some have argued the 'campustification' of a city centre area. It will not as the word 'enhance' implies; improve, upgrade or enrich the lives of local residents, business and organisations. On the contrary it will further lessen, restrict and deplete the limited resources available. Any road closures (even partial) in close proximity to the Bristol Royal Infirmary, St Michael's Maternity Hospital and the Oncology Centre, as well as Bristol Grammar School and nearby Cotham School are ill thought and will have a severe effect on access to these institutions, limiting the routes that vehicles can take and causing pressure around the larger area. There is no valid reason why St Michael's Park should not remain two way to allow some extra flow of cars away from this junction and for access to it from Woodland Rd, otherwise it will become a cul-de-sac for University parking. The idea of closing this junction is simplistic and ill thought, traffic flows cannot be decided on the preference of one institution, it must be sensitive to the surrounding area and its requirements, there is a bigger picture to consider. This proposal singularly fails to do this and does nothing to alleviate the already existent pressure on nearby St Michael's Hill. I know, I live there and witness this on a daily basis.

Likewise, the offer of £40,000 towards the alleviation of what will be extra traffic pressures on St Michael's Hill between Tyndall Avenue and Tyndall Park Road is derisory. That amount will not even touch the sides of what would be required to make necessary changes to traffic calming and safety measures along that stretch of road.

The proposed demolition of the Hawthorns and the creation of a new library may be welcomed but the worry expressed in many comments regarding this proposal is that this will be yet another overlarge building dominating the skyline, and which is totally unsympathetic to the conservation area on which it borders. It is no surprise to anybody who has ventured along Tyndall Avenue towards St Michael's Hill that the University seems to be a leader in overlarge, bland construction, I refer to the recent Life Science building on St Michael's Hill and the incongruous yellow oblongs that frame the front windows. The current Arts and Social Sciences Library on the adjacent corner an excellent example of brutalist architecture which has not aged well from water damage and decay but as a consequence I would have expected that the

University would learn some lessons from these and seek to ensure that the height and style of the proposed new library compliments the nearby buildings and their ambience. The view W/SW from our property which is Grade 11 listed will be seriously be affected by this proposed overlarge monolith, currently our view is beyond and over The Hawthorns and as far as Clifton and towards Ashton Park and we would like it to stay that way. Another concern is the increase in night-time light pollution, this will most certainly be an issue with such a large glass fronted building, Evidence of this is that the current Arts and Social Science Library has full lighting on certain levels polluting the rear area of our house on St Michael's Hill throughout the night.

I notice that for some while the pendants adorning the lampposts on Tyndall Avenue triumphantly announce the building of this new library even before planning permission has been given, it appears that the decision is a shoo-in, is that correct?

Finally, the recommendation for approval emphasises the benefit of the University of Bristol on the city's economy; does it, does it really? Certainly landlords, bars, restaurants, take-aways and express supermarkets have all benefited but the increase in student numbers has also had a detrimental economic impact on the city with reduced Council tax receipts and upward pressure on local rents and house prices. Place this alongside the negative impact on local neighbourhoods of noise and rubbish pollution and I'm not as convinced as the Development Control Committee summary suggests, that, "(T)he harm is considered to be outweighed by these public benefits". Maybe that it is because those individuals don't live nearby and actually experience what we the local community do.

On this basis I strongly object to these two proposals and ask that this joint application is rejected, and should the University decide to re-submit such a proposal in the future then can I ask that serious consideration is given to the views of the local community, businesses and establishments as have repeatedly been expressed in response to this application.

**To:** Bristol City Council's Democratic Services for Development Control Committee B, meeting at 6pm on Thursday 25 February 2021.

**Written Statement from Christmas Steps Arts Quarter (Residents and Traders)**

**re. Planning Application 20/00433/F - Proposed demolition of the Hawthorns and replacement with large University library; pedestrianise central stretch of Woodland Road.**

**STATEMENT** A mass of 240 objections to this application has been submitted, expressing strong opposition from many respected bodies including Historic England, Bristol Civic Society, Conservation Advisory Panel, Bristol Grammar School, Clifton & Hotwells Improvement Society, The Victorian Society, Pegasus Group, Highbury Villas Residents' Association, IMA Transport Planning, The Christmas Steps Arts Quarter and others.

They object variously to the flouting of many planning policies and guidelines:

- The overwhelming mass vastly exceeds the previously agreed Masterplan.
- The design and materials clash with the conservation area's character.
- The huge white library would be an eyesore and would demean the nearby listed buildings: Bristol Grammar School, Old Fort House, Physics Building, Fry Building and listed townhouses along Woodland Road.
- The closure/campusification of Woodland Road would block off one of the few remaining access routes to and from the nearby hospitals and Christmas Steps Arts Quarter and beyond.
- Many important transport issues have not yet been resolved, and it is most unwise to approve this application until they have been resolved.

This Association strongly objects to this proposal, but would be more sympathetic to a more modest, less aggressive building that respects Bristol's character, its neighbouring historic buildings and surrounding conservation areas.

Hamilton Caswell on behalf of the Christmas Steps Arts Quarter (Residents & Traders)

11 Lower Church Lane, Bristol, BS2 8BA  
0117 9077960 [hamiltoncaswell@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hamiltoncaswell@hotmail.co.uk)

Cllr Tincknell and I have supported the need for a path in Stoke Path both to improve disabled access, and also to open up new routes for improved active travel and greater connectivity that will serve the new housing in Lockleaze. We appreciate there are technical reasons for a change to the surface from bound gravel to a buff coloured natural quartzite asphalt surface. We understand this material to be more durable, less costly to maintain and it would have certain advantages in terms of being a better surface for wheelchair users and would match the surface of the existing path on the far side of Stoke Park. The construction technique would also better preserve the archaeology of the carriage drive.

We also think the surfaced path is needed to allow for better maintenance of the park's landscape and infrastructure, to allow access for emergency vehicles, and to improve health and safety for park users. Stoke Park would become properly inclusive in a way it has never been before. Everyone should have the right to be able to safely access their nearest green space, for all the health benefits of enjoying nature and exercising outdoors.

We know there have been many more people using Stoke Park since the pandemic began, and we welcome this, as many local residents from all sides of the park are appreciating the beauty of this protected green space, often for the first time. However we know this extra footfall has had an impact on the landscape, even before the winter set in. With the onset of the wet winter weather, this year the park has become muddier and more dangerous underfoot than we have ever seen it. Large expanses of the fields are now churned up and have become impassable. We have heard from many local residents, very disappointed that they have had to give up walking in Stoke Park as they can't safely navigate the muddy entrances. This includes older, less mobile people and mothers with buggies or carrying small babies.

We have learnt from our Parks team that the extensive mud this year has made it more unsafe and damaging to the landscape to get vehicles into Stoke Park to undertake basic maintenance and improvements to the access points.

If this situation continues over time there will be a severe deterioration of the protected landscape the council has worked so hard to preserve, through the recent restoration project. We do therefore support the change of conditions proposed in this application.

Gill Kirk  
Councillor for Lockleaze (Labour)

## Public forum statement of Stephen Bartle regarding application 20/04821/X

Further to my previous comments regarding this application, I would like to remind the committee that they are not being asked to consider whether it is desirable or not to improve access to Stoke Park Estate or not. You should not be swayed by emotive arguments regarding wheelchair users, the elderly, parents with buggies, and cyclists, nor accept anecdotal reports from Councillors as to the level of demand for a path - support not demonstrated in response to the application. The needs of these people are all very important, but Bristol City Council already has planning permission to build a self-binding gravel path, as per the previous application. All of the aforementioned users would be able to use that path if it were to be built as at countless other heritage destinations across Britain. This is about whether it is appropriate or justifiable to lay over five thousand square metres of modern asphalt in such a pristine and sensitive parkland, comprised of lush meadows, ancient woodland and species rich grassland. It's about whether it is justifiable to affect the historic and ecological gravitas of this estate/parkland, when a viable alternative, which could actually support and enhance those characteristics, already exists. Technical issues can be overcome if the desire is there from the council to overcome them. Hopefully the number of objections you have already received (92 at the time of writing) demonstrates a snapshot of the strength of feeling on this matter.

In my previous submission I refer to a petition of some 1244 signatures, which asked the council to re-think their original proposal prior to the first application gaining approval. This was ignored - the people of Bristol spoke but the council aren't listening. The opening line of the officer's report to committee further sets the dismissive tone by saying that this is a **minor** material amendment. Historic England did not previously support an asphalt path, nor still do Avon Gardens Trust, nor the Conservation Advisory Panel (comprising representatives of the national heritage groups: The Georgian Group, Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, The Victorian Society, The Twentieth Century Society). They all supported the self-binding gravel ('Hoggin') proposal, which is successfully used at places like Westonbirt Arboretum - which boasts full wheelchair access, massive footfall and regular service vehicle use. Avon Gardens Trust and The Conservation Advisory Panel object to this asphalt proposal. Historic England have subsequently been swayed, but I suspect that there are other factors that have forced their hand on this matter, not least the fact that Historic England part-funded the Conservation Management Plan which the council use to guide their development of Stoke Park. The need to conserve that relationship is obviously a strong factor here. Historic England have been left with little choice but to remove their previous objections.

The fact that the council are only now saying there are technical issues which necessitate a change of surface from gravel to asphalt is risible. BCC were granted over £500k to develop proposals for Stoke Park and Muller Rd works, and subsequently directed a lot of Transport team resources at developing their path proposal over a period of nearly two years, including archaeological test pits and topographical surveying, flood officer assessment etc. To suggest that engineers have now decided that only an asphalt surface can overcome the technical challenges is very disingenuous. Perhaps instead we should consider that the council did not have the support of the aforementioned consultees (for BCC's preferred asphalt proposal), so instead decided to gain planning approval for their more-acceptable plan B (i.e. self-binding gravel), safe in the knowledge that they could work on Historic England and come back with an application such as this to get what they really wanted across the line via a "minor amendment." It's the oldest trick in the book, and it makes a mockery of those consultees and members of the public who gave their support to the original proposal.

To add insult to injury, the officer report proceeds by classifying the harm that will be caused to the park by asphalt as "less than substantial." Are we to take the BCC/Historic England definition as

being the gospel on this? A substantial proportion of the users of Stoke Park demonstrably (and the aforementioned consultees) do not agree with that classification. Anyone who has walked around a British heritage destination and felt the firm crunch of self-binding gravel or “hoggin” under their feet will know that the thought of walking around the same location on modern asphalt would be vastly inferior and that the experience would be harmed as a result. Stoke Park is a time capsule of history and nature in a bubble surrounded by rapid growth of modern developments and urbanisation. To see asphalt hit these meadows would be heart-breaking, and would inevitably lead to further inappropriate additions and development of the park in the future.

I would like to remind the committee of the following policy considerations:

-Stoke Park Estate is classified as a treasured ‘Local Green Space’ and a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Policy GI1 of the Bristol City Draft Local Plan recognises Stoke Park as a ‘Local Green Space’

-The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that the characteristics of a LGS should be protected. Paragraph 100b of the NPPF states that a Local Green Space is “demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;” Paragraph 101 says “Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.” Note that the NPPF refers to “demonstrably special **to a local community**” and “holds a particular **local significance.**” This is inherently defined by the users of the park, not by the council. It is not for the council or Historic England to override what is special, nor to decide what would be harmful or not. Enough people have objected over the last couple of years to demonstrate how we feel about this place, and the harm that will be caused by this inappropriate material being used.

- The NPPF also has an environmental objective “to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.” Using over 5000 square metres of asphalt (which the council’s own document says has a 15-20 year lifespan and cannot be recycled) when there are lower impact and more environmentally friendly alternatives does not support this aim of the NPPF. The NPPF goes on to say that “Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.” It does not say that you can use technical trump cards in order to get an inappropriate alternative development across the line. It is fundamental that we must protect this place, not simply cave in when technical issues make an easier alternative more attractive and cost effective to the council.

-Paragraph 170a of the NPPF says “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.” This development does not do that, it is to the detriment of those aims.

Finally, it should be noted that original funding application for this project cited the need to invest in local sustainable transport improvements in order to ensure that local housing developments (notably several developments in Lockleaze, including the Romney House site being developed by

the council's Goram Homes) gained planning approval. It seems apparent in that context that there is a deep political desire to get this harmful asphalt path approved in order that the developments surrounding Stoke Park can tick a planning requirement box. Stoke Park's historical and ecological importance is already under severe pressure from the developments around it and I would strongly urge councillors to dig deep and consider whether putting asphalt into the parkland itself would not be a step too far.

Stoke Park Estate is a treasured 'Local Green Space' (important to define it as that) & a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Policy G11 of the Bristol City Draft Local Plan recognises Stoke Park as a 'Local Green Space'

- using Stone Mastic Asphalt will harm the characteristics of Stoke Park, namely it's tranquil open feel, and will harm the historic feel of the landscape by introducing modern materials and markings to the meadows. This will harm people's enjoyment of the LGS and is unnecessary.

Can I refresh your memories/knowledge of the following please .....

-The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that the characteristics of a LGS should be protected. Paragraph 100b of the NPPF states that a Local Green Space is "demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;" Paragraph 101 says "Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts."

- The NPPF also has an environmental objective to "to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy." Using thousands of square metres of asphalt when there are lower impact and more environmentally friendly alternatives does not support this aim of the NPPF. The NPPF goes on to say that "Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area." Bristol City Council are ignoring this in their desire to stick an asphalt transport link across our treasured green space. Once the asphalt is in, the natural and unspoilt charm of the top of the park will be ruined forever. This does not need to happen – a hard gravel path WILL improve access and links for those on foot and bike, but with less impact on the valued characteristics of Stoke Park.

- Condition 8, imposed on the original planning application to make the path from self-binding gravel, was put into the permission to ensure that the appearance of the path would be appropriate to the setting. It is clear that Historic England did not support the idea of an asphalt path, nor did Avon Gardens Trust, nor would the majority of the public. It was disingenuous of the council to seek approval for a self-binding gravel path, with the support of key consultees (without whom they wouldn't have received approval), to then try and change that material afterwards using a variation of conditions application. It is completely implausible that all technical and archaeological aspects were not considered by the Transport Team engineers when putting together their original application.

- The petition 'Re-think the Stoke Park Path' (1244 signatures to date) clearly demonstrates strong opposition to the path from people across Bristol – that direct harm will be caused to people's enjoyment of the park.

-The council have not adequately demonstrated support for their proposal, especially not for an asphalt one. 89 objections were lodged against this 'variation of conditions' application (20/04821/X). Only a handful of comments of support were submitted - 2 from the local Labour councillors with a natural bias towards the development, 2 from employees of Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust (part-funded by the council), another by a council contractor, leaving only 3 from members of the public. Anecdotal 'evidence' from councillors regarding support for 'improved access' are not relevant to this specific application, and have not been demonstrated by actual submissions of support anyway. This is not a debate about whether access should be improved, it is about the materials that are used to make that improvement, and whether they are appropriate in this valued and sensitive setting.

-Paragraph 170a of the NPPF says "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland." This development does not do that, it is to the detriment of those characteristics.

to sum it up for you ... this change in surface actually goes against the council's own policy for green spaces and the introduction of a TRANSPORT route through the estate .. yes estate, it is not a park but an estate the same as Ashton court and Baze ... please treat it as such... there are roads around the whole perimeter from traffic and the total difference in cycle time these routes as opposed to the proposed tarmac route is 1 1/2 mins .. you will do this for 1 minute if time ??? such a ridiculous idea...

regards

don wilson

Dear Sir/ Madam

I understand that Bristol City Council is still pushing ahead with the idea of making a path through Stoke Park Estate out of asphalt. I would like to make a further statement of objections for the following reasons:

Stoke Park Estate is a treasured 'Local Green Space' (important to define it as that) & a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Policy GI1 of the Bristol City Draft Local Plan recognises Stoke Park as a 'Local Green Space'

Using Stone Mastic Asphalt will harm the characteristics of Stoke Park, namely it's tranquil open feel, and will harm the historic feel of the landscape by introducing modern materials and markings to the meadows. This will harm people's enjoyment of the LGS and is unnecessary.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that the characteristics of a LGS should be protected. Paragraph 100b of the NPPF states that a Local Green Space is "demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;" Paragraph 101 says "Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts."

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Condition 8, imposed on the original planning application to make the path from self-binding gravel, was put into the permission to ensure that the appearance of the path would be appropriate to the setting. It is clear that Historic England did not support the idea of an asphalt path, nor did Avon Gardens Trust, nor would the majority of the public. It was disingenuous of the council to seek approval for a self-binding gravel path, with the support of key consultees (without whom they wouldn't have received approval), to then try and change that material afterwards using a variation of conditions application. It is completely implausible that all technical and archaeological aspects were not considered by the Transport Team engineers when putting together their original application.

The petition 'Re-think the Stoke Park Path' (1244 signatures to date) clearly demonstrates strong opposition to the path from people across Bristol – that direct harm will be caused to people's enjoyment of the park.

The council have not adequately demonstrated support for their proposal, especially not for an asphalt one. 89 objections were lodged against this 'variation of conditions' application (20/04821/X). Only a handful of comments of support were submitted - 2 from the local Labour councillors with a natural bias towards the development, 2 from employees of Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust (part-funded by the council), another by a council contractor, leaving only 3 from members of the public. Anecdotal 'evidence' from councillors regarding support for 'improved access' are not relevant to this specific application, and have not been demonstrated by actual submissions of support anyway. This is not a debate about whether access should be improved, it is about the materials that are used to make that improvement, and whether they are appropriate in this valued and sensitive setting.

Paragraph 170a of the NPPF says "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,

sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.” This development does not do that, it is to the detriment of those characteristics.

Yours sincerely

T. Lansdowne.

Dear Bristol council

Stop ruining dwindling green space with tarmac.

That's all that needs said.

Your email address however is interesting, i genuinely wonder how "democratic" this process will be.

Yours,

Resident and user of Stoke Park Estate, who appreciates open space without the need to pour concrete into it.

Regards,

Scott

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please could you accept these comments for the attention of the Planning Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup>, February, 2021.

I wish to object to the proposal to install an asphalt path across Stoke Park estate. I believe this would be an intrusive and detrimental development that is not in keeping with a designated 'Local Green Space' and a site of nature conservation interest.

The character of the park is essentially meadows and woodland that are important for nature conservation and diversity and to provide a recreational value to local residence in keeping with a natural landscape. I think if there has to be a path then there must be a way of establishing one by a different means that provides adequate access and is much more in keeping with the natural characteristics of the park than modern asphalt. People who use the park value these characteristics and I believe significant opposition has been expressed about the current proposals.

I believe the council has a duty of care to protect green spaces for environmental reasons and for the benefit of local people. This should involve having the least possible intrusive impact on the natural characteristics of the park. An asphalt path would be inappropriate and damaging and is not commensurate with council policies on green space and the environment.

I urge the committee to reject the current proposal and to seek a better solution to the access arrangements.

Best regards,  
Richard Simpson.

Dear Council, I object to the above tarmac path being built as it is unnatural and unseemly for the ambience of Stoke Park.

Regards, Robert Clarke

Hi,

I would like to make a written anonymous statement for the above to be read by officers. I cannot attend the meeting due to work commitments.

I understand that the planning decision relates to a change of surface to the path which was planned to go through Stoke Park to improve access. The proposed surface of gravel was widely supported by the community, due to the lesser impact on the historic parkland. This surface type has clear evidence of being successful for disabled access as can be seen at places such as Westonbirt - mobility scooters, wheelchairs and buggies are all able to use this surface type successfully. This is also demonstrated in North Somerset LA where they have a disability trail in a local woodland (Weston Woods) made with gravel tracks.

I live locally and have volunteered in the park for around 10 years. Although there is an existing tarmac/asphalt path in the park it has proven to be dangerous to other park users due to the speed of which the surface allows bikes to travel on. When I have led groups in the park and we have used the existing asphalt path we have frequently been put at risk by people commuting by bike going too fast. This path is often avoided by people with pushchairs and mobility scooters as they can't compete with the speed of bikes coming through. I believe that a gravel surface would slow bikes down, which would make it a safer path for all park users, particularly those with sensory disabilities eg hearing loss or mobility difficulties which mean they can't quickly move out of the way of commuting bikes. The community have not been fully consulted about the change in surface to the path and I feel that changing the surface type now in this way does not include fair discussion with disabled park users and families who need a safe path to access the park on.

I have looked at the objections to the proposal and note there are 89 objections and 4 agreements (2 from Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust and local councillors) As a local resident that lives a 5 minute walk from the park I do not feel I have been consulted for my views on the change of surface by either my local councillors or Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust, so it is not clear how the comments of support can clearly support the views of the park users and constituency as a whole.

Paragraph 170a of the NPPF says "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland." This development does not do that, it is to the detriment of those characteristics.

Stoke Park has been appreciated during lockdown for it's wildness, ability to get close to nature, it's important people can access the park without fear of being injured by a busy bike commuter link. If the aim of the path is to improve access to the park the gravel surface clearly meets this aim and there is no need for it to be altered. I hope that the planning

officers are able to see the strength of feeling within the community about protecting the beauty and historic nature of Stoke Park whilst ensuring people with accessibility needs can be included too. My concern about the change of surface is based on my experience of using the park for 15 years and frequently having to jump off the existing asphalt path to avoid being run over, I am lucky to have the agility to do this, many park users won't be so aware.

Please can you confirm receipt and that this will be read by officers as a submitted statement. I understand the deadline is 12pm today, my request is to remain anonymous but if this prevents my statement from being read please can you include my name,

Many thanks,

Ruth Revell

**Development Control B Committee Meeting - Thursday 25th February**

**2 Alpha Road - Ref. 20/04645/F**

**Proposed additional residential dwelling to replace the consented commercial unit  
(COU of commercial space to residential)**

Members of the committee I would like to bring to your attention that I have been involved with the former Imp public house site since February 2016.

Planning permission was granted in November 2016 for a change of use of the public house to a cafe (Use Class A3 at the time) and to create several residential units with associated provision of refuse and cycle storage.

When the pub was first bought it was listed as an Asset of Community Value. Following the 2016 planning permission and over the subsequent years of ownership, we were in close discussion with the Alphaville Residents Association, who expressed an interest in the ground floor unit becoming a community shop/café. We discussed this approach at length, but nothing came of it even after we had offered them very favorable rental terms to help them establish a new business.

We then started actively marketing the space in May 2019 and in July 2019 we began the conversion works to create the flats and commercial unit in the main building. The first thing the builders did was to strip out the whole building, which allowed interested parties to see the commercial space on the ground and lower ground floor clearly.

Sadly, there was very little interest and no one was forthcoming with an offer to take on the unit. We then applied, and got consent in March 2020, for lightwells to the front of the building with the aim of making the lower ground floor commercial space more appealing with natural light.

This has not changed the market interest as no party has come forward with firm interest and no offers have been made.

So, in summary the space has been considered as a commercial operation for many years and in the last 20 months shown as a flexible open plan space, but with no genuine interest to date.

We are intending to keep this unit to rent out and the return for the commercial unit would probably be a better investment route than residential due to the level of the rent and low conversion costs, however, we can't see a viable operator coming forward. Whist the Covid-19 situation hasn't helped, there are many empty units in the established local retail centers such as

on East Street and Bedminster Parade which provide a more attractive and viable setting for a café business to operate.

Consequently, we request that the committee supports our application and the Planning Officer's recommendation to change this space to residential flat.

Tim Buxton

## Written statement to Development Control Committee B – 25/2/2021

### Application No. 20/04645/F : 2 Alpha Road Bristol BS3 1DH

**Statement from:** Eric Booth

**Address:** 13 Alpha Road Southville Bristol BS3 1DH

The Committee Report of 17 Feb 2021 contains some significant omissions and undervalues other issues. We would respectfully ask Committee to fully consider these, as giving consent to this proposal will permanently change the nature of our neighbourhood. It may be that there will in future be a similar application to convert to a residential unit but it is unreasonable to make the change at this time.

#### 1. Relevant History

The report only lists planning applications and fails to set out the previous registration of the property as an Asset of Community Value in Dec 2015, the result of much community organising and discussion. What was clear from Alphaville Residents Association (<https://alphasouthville.wordpress.com>) annual street parties and other events is that the very wide junction of Alpha Road and Southville Place forms a natural 'village green' and centre to the neighbourhood, the oldest part of Southville and which we call Alphaville.



This space, whether 'pop up' or we hope in due course to be properly designed, will only work if there is something other than housing facing onto it; there has to be a reason to pause and interact. This is what a small cafe will bring.

We had extensive discussions with the purchasers, Cabot Trustees, and reached a compromise on an agreed planning application that satisfied both parties and so we endorsed the change of use application 16/03638/F. We then entered into a 'heads of terms' to take on the cafe. A not for profit company limited by guarantee was set up with the aim of holding the lease, Alphaville Community Enterprises Ltd. This broke down when the owners (Cabot Trustees) announced that they had agreed to sell to a third party and were not willing to formalise the agreement with the new owners (Solid State (Easton)). It subsequently emerged that the 'new owners' were in fact another vehicle for current owner Tim Buxton. It was clear that the 'selling' was merely a device to get them out of any constraints, with a likely outcome of losing the commercial unit.

#### 2. Insufficient effort and time to find tenant.

Contrary to the case made in the application that it has not been possible to find a tenant, we suggest that no small cafe/retail business would be in a position to sign a lease a year in advance for somewhere not even built. Further that no business would have even considered such a lease in the past exceptional 9 months. Given the history of the property and previous planning applications, the owner should be required to complete the cafe/retail unit as approved in 16/03638/F and amended in 19/01144/X. They need to have

premises available for lease for a significant period post Covid before any change be even considered, to allow a fair opportunity to find a tenant. The Committee Report notes "that at present the development is not complete" but "not started" would be a fairer assessment of the situation at the start of the pandemic, when anyone might have looked.

### **3. Possible tenants.**

Prior to the breakdown of the heads of terms agreement with Alphaville Community Enterprises Ltd, residents were in discussion with a number of interested parties in taking on lease. The question always came up about when premises would be available but the answer was always some vague time into the future. Small business of this type do not have long lead times and are unwilling to plan or commit for something months or years into the future. Since 2019, and when there was still nothing to show on site, trading conditions are absolutely impossible and it's imperative that a site is available for a good period before it's possible to judge viability.

### **4. Over-intensive development.**

The Committee Report notes that the site is set within the 'inner urban area' of the city and notes that the suggested optimum density should be 120 dwellings per hectare. It then goes on to say that it is close to the 'city centre' where 200dpw is optimum and so considers the site density of 185 dph acceptable. However this is wholly out of keeping with the nature of the neighbourhood, which is emphatically NOT 'city centre' in terms of look and feel but a residential and certainly 'inner urban'.



There will now be SIX residential units in this one property which is out of keeping with the neighbourhood and will have a negative impact on residents. This was already a major objection to the original planning application by many residents. Loss of the retail/cafe unit to a further small flat would build in future problems and issues.

### **5. Loss of community amenity.**

The Committee Report makes much of the presence of other cafes on Gaol Ferry Steps, Bedminster Parade and other local places which of course is true if you as an individual were looking for a cafe or shop. What those places absolutely don't do is have any kind of influence on our neighbourhood in the way that the proposed unit facing out onto our streets and towards St Paul's Church would do.

### **6. 'Playing' of the planning system.**

Previous planning variation 19/01144/X from March 2019 included the proposal to "Increase the amount of floor space at lower ground floor level by increasing the café by 10.27sq.m and unit 1 by 4.9sq.m". This involved an extensive excavation for a small and arguably unnecessary gain to the retail unit. The approval stated rightly "The increase in

basement storage is considered acceptable and would provide adequate additional storage space.” It is now clear that this was only done with the clear intention, *over 18 months ago*, to allow for a sixth residential unit to be squeezed in. This is further evidence that there was never any serious intention to provide a cafe/retail unit according to the original planning approval.

We ask the planning committee to stand up for the interests of our community and neighbourhood . You are our last chance to preserve some kind of community value in what has been the ‘village green’ at the centre of our street parties and gatherings. If approved we will have forever lost what could and should be the heart of our neighbourhood.



Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to make a written public forum statement about the above application.

I believe the application should be refused. The original approved application was a package including a commercial place, that would add to the area. It looks like the developers have gone ahead, all along hoping to get what they wanted.

With the success of Wapping Wharf so close the space could be rented out at a realistic rate. There are already too many flats in this area.

Mr Brockman

RE Application no. 20/04645/F

Site address: 2 Alpha Road Bristol BS3 1DH

Proposal: Proposed additional residential dwelling to replace the consented commercial unit (amending 16/03638/F, as varied by 19/01144/X and 19/05993/X) with associated works.

Please include this written statement in the meeting to be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> February

I am a local resident to the former Imp Pub and would like to flag to the planning committee that in my view Tim Buxton and the Space works building developers have not acted in good faith and adhered to the original grounds on which planning application was granted. They have made no effort to consult or include the local neighbours in the development and planning, and in my view have shown themselves to be singularly focused on their own profits, and interests. I have observed them run an unsafe and disruptive building site that brings no value or benefit to the community which was a crucial part of how planning was originally granted. I have listed my views below.

#### **Context originally**

- A group active local residents got an order placed on the Imp when it came up for sale that tried to ensure that the premises had to be used in part to provide some community value.
- The original application was granted and allowed a 2 story additional house to be built in the garden on the premise that the front area remained an asset of community value.
- The building of the additional house in the garden has significantly changed the view of the gardens and has created an environment in the back that is not in keeping historically and now feels over developed. This has also now set a precedent for excessive development.
- I suspect that the very slow nature of the way this project has progressed has been intentional so that this change was always intended from the outset

#### **Site safety and respect for the community**

- I have to date not observed any of the builders wear PPE
- The site has taken over the entire street at times **and the pavement** which I have raised with Tim directly on numerous occasions as a safety concern as it forces the many children who attend Holy cross to walk in the street to get around
- The builders have worked constantly and very slowly throughout the entire period of lockdown when we have been trapped in our homes. We have flagged the constant noise issue that dominated much of our lives in spring and summer to the council who tried to limit the hours and noise levels.
- The air pollution from huge levels of dust has been significant and left all the surrounding houses covered in dust
- The alarm is regularly set off at night which causes additional disruption on a regular basis

#### **What contribution will these developers give back to the community?**

If this application is granted what will Tim Buxton and his group do to contribute to the community to recognise the loss and impact that losing the central hub of our street and area?

I am keen that we are able to create a zone around the front of the pub so that we can still create the feeling of the central part to the street where we gather for 'playing out' and also the street party etc

Can we request that there is a stipulation that Tim has to consult with the local residents to provide some amount of street planters and ways to create an area outside the pub. Rather than him being able to parking spaces!

Yours sincerely

Tilly Langton