

**Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Development Control B Committee**

25 February 2021 at 6.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Richard Eddy (Vice-Chair), Lesley Alexander, Tom Brook (Chair), Mike Davies, Paul Goggin, Fi Hance, Chris Jackson, Jo Sergeant, Stephen Clarke, and Nicola Bowden-Jones.

Officers in Attendance:-

Gary Collins – Service Manager – Development Management, Allison Taylor – Democratic Services

1. Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence.

There were none.

3. Declarations of Interest.

Councillor Clarke declared, in respect to the Alpha Road application, that he was the ward Councillor and was familiar with the site but remain open-minded.

Councillor Sergeant declared, in respect of the Hawthorns application, that she had worked for the University and for the Council library in the past but remained open-minded.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 December 2020.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED – that the minutes be approved as a correct record.



5. Appeals.

The Service Manager – Development Management summarised as follows:-

1. Item 14 – St. Catherine’s Place Shopping Centre, Bedminster. This appeal was dismissed and a revised application would be considered at next week’s DC A Committee;
2. Items 67 – 73 – Hamilton House, Stokes Croft. Four Appeals had been dismissed and three allowed. The Planning Inspector determined that the different parts of the building constituted a planning unit in its own right. The Planning Inspector then considered whether individual units were lawful office use as of May 2013 and it was determined that four of them were. The applicant had not appealed 2 refusals;
3. Item 85 – Giant Goram, Barrowmead Drive – This was dismissed as the applicant had not demonstrated that the pub was not economically viable. It was also found that the pub was a community facility and the community had already lost many other community facilities. The Inspector gave weight to the Lawrence Weston Neighbourhood Development Plan and that the building was locally listed and would be a loss of a historic asset, without overriding public benefit.

Points following questions:-

1. St Catherine’s Place Public Inquiry – The Committee would be informed of the costs from the engagement of external consultants. However, the Council were unable to prove unreasonable behaviour from the applicant in order to claim costs for the Public Inquiry;
2. Giant Goram Public House - Councillor Sergeant wished to thank the Planning Officer who had worked hard in defending the decision of the Committee at appeal.

6. Enforcement

There had been 1 notice since the last Committee.

7. Public Forum

Members of the Committee received Public Forum Statements in advance of the meeting.

The statements were heard before each application they related to and were taken fully into consideration by the Committee prior to reaching a decision.



8. Planning and Development

The Committee considered the following applications set out below:

9. 20/00433/F – The Hawthorns, Woodland Road.

An Amendment Sheet was provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting, detailing changes since the publication of the original report.

The Service Manager - Development Management commented by way of introduction:-

1. The application was due to be considered in September 2020 but was withdrawn at short notice to allow for a further impact assessment on St Michael's Hill;
2. The technical assessments of the impacts undertaken by Transport Development Management were still valid;
3. It was important to note that the Committee, as Local Planning Authority, must consider the planning application before them only and whilst there were implications to a Traffic Regulation Order a decision on this would be taken by the Transport Authority at a later date and second guessing that process should be avoided.

The Planning Officer summarised the application as follows:-

1. The application proposed the redevelopment of The Hawthorns and its replacement with a new library for the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty, and to support and enhance the services offered by the broader library and student centres network. It would provide services, study spaces, programmes and events;
2. The Hawthorns building had changed a lot over the years and now there was nothing coherent about it and it had very little heritage value left;
3. There had been extensive pre-application consultation and this had led to some changes in the design scheme;
4. The design showed a clear step line from Elton Road and was a striking, modern, contemporary civic building and would be visible on the skyline of the city;
5. It was assessed that the building would not overshadow the Grammar School but would dominate it;
6. The ground floor of the building would be open to the public and would have no barriers or gates. The scheme went beyond the confines of the University as it was hoped to become a cultural asset and aspect of the city;
7. In the first round of consultation 139 responses of support and 116 objections were received. After the scheme was amended a second round of consultation resulted in 3 responses of support and 63 objections. The main issues objected to were the impact and harm to heritage, the scale in the surrounding area, the design, schoolchildren and student safety with through traffic. Support was given to the transformation of the area, the improvements to pedestrian safety and the public access;



8. There was strong support in the Development Plan for such a high quality design with its mix of innovations and of visual interest. The building met the Council's sustainability policy but was undeniably large and impacted on heritage assets;
9. Officers must give great weight to heritage assets and any harm needed clear justification. The harm must be weighed against public benefits. The University had reduced the size of the library from the original brief and had justified the harm. On balance, officers felt that the public benefits outweighed the less than substantial harm to heritage assets;

The Transport Development Manager commented as follows:-

10. Officers had collaborated with the University and stakeholders in the area;
11. The scheme would improve the environment for pedestrians by reclaiming a large area and would also form part of the cycle network;
12. There would be consultation on the proposed TRO as part of the statutory process and this would consider the wider area;
13. It was recommended that the scheme be approved subject to Section 106 contributions.
14. In summary, the Planning Officer concluded that the transport changes were acceptable and the harm had been justified and the public benefit outweighed that harm.

The following points arose from questions:-

1. It was not known which objector had engaged Pegasus Planning to represent their views;
2. Local residents had been consulted but it was necessary to draw the line on local residents somewhere;
3. The ground floor did jut out but it did not impinge on the existing highway so there was no land transfer;
4. The highway works had not been adjusted since the original application was submitted. The University had responded to the Transport Statement by producing their own analysis and data. Officers challenged the methodology and it was found to be robust and officers were therefore content with it;
5. The Service Manager – Development Management added that Officers had pushed the University regarding mitigation measures but they had made the case and it was considered proportionate and acceptable;
6. It was for the Committee to decide on harm versus public benefit by considering what was reasonable;
7. Pedestrian movement had been monitored from 7.45 – 8.45am which was the busiest time and therefore the most robust assessment;
8. The building took account of building lines on Elton and Woodland Road and were compliant with policy SPD11;
9. The two disabled parking spaces lost were replaced elsewhere in the scheme;
10. The benefits were direct and indirect to the city. The public would have access to a café, exhibitions and cultural collections and the building would become a cultural asset to the city. It would also regenerate a rather run down area.



The following points arose from debate:-

1. Councillor Eddy expressed concern regarding pedestrian safety and traffic on Elton Road and believed the proposal would damage the character of the conservation area, harming heritage assets. He also did not approve of the design and would vote against it;
2. Councillor Davies approved of the design and believed it could complement the heritage in the area and become part of it. He accepted that the proposals were large but students required a large area and it would provide a world class library and he approved of the features which would be available to the public. He would vote for approval;
3. Councillor Mead accepted that improved student facilities were needed and approved of the design and enhanced facilities but felt that the scale of the proposal dominated the conservation area and would vote against approval;
4. Councillor Clarke acknowledged that there would always be conflict when a University was located in the middle of a city. He liked the building and the innovative ground floor open to the public and the almost public square design and would vote for approval;
5. Councillor Hance believed the less than substantial harm did not outweigh the public benefit so would vote against approval;
6. Councillor Sergeant approved of the scheme and supported the investment in the University if it meant that it was more accessible to lower income families. She believed that it was located within sustainable transport routes so there was no need to go by car and would vote for approval;

There were no further comments so the Chair moved the officer recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Davies. On being put to the vote it was lost – (4 for, 5 against).

Councillor Eddy then moved and it was seconded by Councillor Hance and upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED – (6 for, 2 against, 1 abstention)

1. **That the Committee is minded to refuse the application on the grounds of road safety; scale, massing and design, and impact on heritage assets .**
2. **That the application be deferred pending officers preparing a further report for consideration to a future Committee setting out the proposed reasons for refusal based on these grounds.**

11. 20/04821/X - Stoke Park, Park Road, Stapleton Bristol.

An Amendment Sheet was provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting, detailing changes since the publication of the original report.

The Planning Officer summarised the application as follows:-



1. This application sought permission for minor material amendments to an extant planning permission for a shared use path through Stoke Park Estate, north-east Bristol. The park was a Grade II Listed Registered Historic Park and Garden and was also within the Stapleton and Frome Valley Conservation Area;
2. The amendment was sought to change the materials to construct the path. Transport Officers had been advised by specialist suppliers that the original materials approved were not appropriate for use in the park as gradients were too steep for bound gravel and would degrade quickly over time and result in potholes and puddles;
3. Alternatives were discussed and consulted on and the most appropriate replacement was considered to be natural quartzite asphalt;
4. There had been 93 objections to the variation and 11 in support. Objections detailed the original gravel being more natural and the new material would encourage cyclists to speed. Those supporting believed it would improve access and a more robust surface would prevent buggies/wheelchairs getting stuck;
5. Highway officers supported the proposal as it made the path more accessible and would stand up to use and require less maintenance. Cyclist speeds would be faster but visibility was good and the path width allowed passing room;
6. Officers considered that the new surface would result in a greater degree of harm to the historic park as a designated heritage asset than the previous surface but this was less than substantial harm and the applicant justified the change of materials. In conclusion Officers found that the public benefits outweighed the less than substantial harm.

The following points arose from questions:-

1. Transport Projects Officers had only realised the original material was not appropriate at the point of detailed design following planning permission being granted for the original material when consulting with specialist contractors;
2. A harder surface would allow greater speeds as there was a better surface grip but there were no major concerns regarding conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists due to visibility, space and signage;
3. K-Frame barriers would be installed as per the original consent in order to prohibit anti-social behaviour.
4. It was queried whether proposed signage reminding users that the path was shared use would be sufficient and raised that signage encouraging cyclists to travel slowly should be considered.

The following points arose from debate:-

1. Councillor Eddy noted that the previous application had been fully considered and was unanimously voted for approval. He would vote for approval;
2. Councillor Sergeant would vote for approval but asked if additional signage reminding cyclists about speeding could be considered.

Councillor Hance moved the officer recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Davies and upon being put to the vote, it was:-



RESOLVED (Unanimously) – that the application be granted subject to conditions.

At this point Councillors Eddy and Davies left.

12. 20/04645/F – 2, Alpha Road, Bristol.

An Amendment Sheet was provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting, detailing changes since the publication of the original report.

The Planning Officer summarised the application as follows:-

1. The application had been called-in by ward Councillor Bolton for determination;
2. The proposal was for an additional residential dwelling to replace the consented commercial unit with associated works;
3. The building had previously been a public house with residential accommodation above;
4. The screening for bin storage had now been reduced;
5. The former public house had been marketed as a café for 3 years and despite incentives there had been no uptake. The locality was well served by cafes, pubs and restaurants;
6. A dwelling was compatible given the area was residential;
7. There was some concern regarding light in the basement living spaces but they had been thoughtfully designed to maximise light;
8. Neighbouring amenity was not harmed and there was less impact from the previous commercial use;
9. The development would be 185 dwellings per hectare, above the optimum 120 dph set out within the urban living SPD but this could be exceeded if there was appropriate quality accommodation and this was achieved with this proposal;
10. The proposal was sustainably located and near amenities;
11. As per the previous consent it was not eligible for a parking permit;
12. It had received 13 responses all objecting to the proposal with reasons including loss of a community asset, marketing the café during a pandemic and increased parking pressure;
13. It was recommended for approval subject to conditions.

The following points arose from questions:-

1. The café remained on the market but there had been no uptake;
2. There were lots of cafes with a higher footfall than this site;
3. Parking on the forecourt would result in loss of on-street parking, so there would be no net change



The following points arose from debate:-

1. Councillor Clarke noted that it was within his ward and the pub had been a close-knit community pub. He believed this was planning creep and would vote against approval;
2. Councillor Sergeant believed this was planning by stealth but also did not want an empty property left when it could provide a home to someone;
3. Councillor Hance was disappointed that the café had been 3 years on the market and had not attracted interest and would vote for approval.

The Chair moved the Officer recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Mead and upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED (5 for, 2 against) – that the application be granted subject to conditions and as set out in the Amendment Sheet.

Meeting ended at 9.05 pm

CHAIR _____





