

Public Forum

D C Committee B (Remote)

17th March at 2pm



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

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



NO.	Name	Application
	Question	
PQ01	Suzanne Audrey	On Appeals
	Statements	
		20/00433/F The Hawthorns Woodland Road Bristol Page Number:
PS 01	Mr Barot Head of Bristol Grammar Sch	p.02 Speaking
PS 02	Jonathan Coombs Pegasus Group	p.04 Speaking
PS 03	Jeremy Bladon CSJ Planning	p.05 Speaking
PS 04	Jo Elsworth Director Theatre Collection and Cultural Collections UoB	p.06 Speaking
PS 05	Judith Squires Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost UoB	p.08 Speaking
PS 06	Ethan Osborne-Clarke Student Ambassador, UoB	p.09 Speaking
PS 07	Ed Whitney Lead Transport Planning Consultant for UoB	p.11 Speaking
PS 08	Barra Mac Ruairi - UoB Chief Property Officer	p.13 Speaking
PS 09	Rycharde Hawkes	p.15
PS 10	Lynda Hall	p.17 Speaking
PS 11	Gillian Tomlinson	p.19
PS 12	Claire Probert	p.20
PS 13	Sarah Bann	p.21
PS 14	Caroline Perkins	p.22
PS 15	Scott Rayner	p.23
PS 16	Mrs & Mrs Mussa	p.24
PS 17	Emma Downing	p.25
PS 18	Claire Stewart Hall	p.26
PS 19	Ed Fay	p.27
PS 20	David Ion	p.28



DC B Question with reply

SUZANNE AUDREY

I would like to ask the following question at Development Control B Committee, 17th March 2021.

I would like to attend the meeting.

Best wishes

Suzanne Audrey

Question

I read with interest in the Appeals: Public Realm Colston Avenue Bristol BS1 4RD. Appeal against non-determination. Temporary art installation for a period of 2 years (retrospective) entitled, 'A Surge of Power (Jen Reid) 2020' on the plinth of the former statue of slave trader Edward Colston (grade II listed). TBA

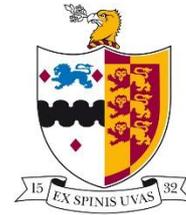
Please can you provide an update on the application and the appeal?

Answer

The appeal is against the Council's non-determination of the applications that were submitted. The Council as Local Planning Authority didn't make decisions on these applications and now the decision will be made by an Inspector appointed on behalf of the Secretary of State, following a Hearing. Committee will be kept updated on proceedings, including the date of the Hearing

**From the office of the Headmaster:
Mr J M Barot MA, MSc**

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**Bristol
Grammar
School**

(by email)

16 March 2021

PS 01

Dear Councillors,

Development Control Committee B – The Hawthorns Planning Application Number 20/00433/F

As you will recall, we – as a whole school community – opposed this application on a number of grounds when it was presented to the Committee in February, with our principal objections relating to the safety and wellbeing of our pupils, given the traffic changes that would result. We were also concerned about and the negative heritage impact to our Great Hall. I attach a copy of my letter of 23 February, which set out our concerns in more detail. This was submitted to the Committee meeting in February, and all of our points in that letter still stand.

The return to school of all our pupils from 8 March, following many weeks of remote learning at home, has again highlighted the already significant levels of vehicular and pedestrian movements on Elton Road, and the increased risk that would occur with any additional vehicles being diverted onto the road by the University's proposals. Whilst the Transport Development Manager acknowledged our concern that there would be higher pedestrian and vehicle numbers (and as such higher risk) at the morning and afternoon peaks when the applicant undertook their study, he did not refer to our concern about the increased risk throughout the rest of the day when additional vehicles would also be diverted on to Elton Road, at times when our children are regularly crossing the road between class areas.

In relation to the heritage impact of the proposals, and specifically from our perspective, the potential harm to our buildings on Elton Road and the Great Hall, we are also very pleased that you saw beyond the justification put forward for the proposal at the meeting and agreed that the level of harm would not be outweighed by any public access to the building. Whilst certain images were shown in the presentation seeking to diminish the impact, and references were made to a gradual "stepping up" of building heights, we believe that a more accurate demonstration of the harm caused by the scale, mass and design of the building, is depicted by the images on pages 114 and 116 of the Committee Report (images attached), which more accurately show the building completely dwarfing the adjacent Elton Road villas and, as acknowledged by your own officer, dominating The Great Hall.

For all of these reasons we remain strongly opposed to the proposals as they stand due to the significant harm to pupil safety and heritage assets that they would cause, none of which can be morally justified; nor are they outweighed by the benefit of the proposals to the applicant, or the wider public.

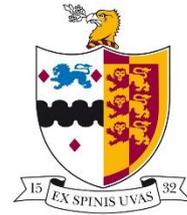
We remain open to discussions with the applicant regarding a form of development on the site that more appropriately recognises the issues that we have raised. We acknowledge the applicant's

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**Bristol
Grammar
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desire to replace the existing building, but there must be genuine and detailed consultation with us, which unfortunately has not happened up to now. In addition to limited consultation with us, and subsequent to the Committee's meeting in February, we have been made aware of other key institutions in the area who were not formally consulted at all in the process, despite the proposals potentially impacting very seriously on their operations, and this has inevitably led to even further disquiet.

In closing, we thank you for your continued attention to this matter and to our concerns over the proposals, and trust that at the forthcoming meeting the application is formally refused for the reasons now set out by your officers in their Committee report, reasons which we trust will echo the issues we have been putting forward throughout the process.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr Jaideep Barot
Headmaster**

Headmaster:
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Statement to Development Control Committee

Project Name: The Hawthorns, Woodlands Road, Bristol, BS8 1UQ
Reference: 20/00433/F
Date of Committee: 17th March 2021

Pegasus Group are supportive of Members concerns in respect of this application proposal on grounds of design and excessive massing; harmful impact upon heritage assets that are not outweighed by the public benefits and unacceptable highway safety issues.

Our planning, design and heritage specialists have reviewed the corresponding reason for refusal and agree that given the nature of the proposal it will very clearly be able to be robustly defended at a possible appeal.

It is noted that the Transport Development Management Department have provided 3 no. reasons for refusal but consider that any transport reason for refusal would not be defensible at appeal.

This is very much in contrast to ours and other professional highway assessments of the proposals undertaken to date.

Should Members decide to include the 3 no. highways reasons for refusal, and should the University be minded to pursue an appeal, the unacceptable highways impacts would be bolstered then fully and robustly addressed by a specialist team supporting a Rule 6 party.

The Hawthorns offers such a clear opportunity for a quality scheme of respectful design, scale and character and we encourage the University to properly engage with Officers and Politicians of the Council and undertake meaningful consultation with key stakeholders to help swiftly deliver a respectful building the city can be proud of.

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns
Statement by Jeremy Bladon, Director, CSJ Planning Consultants Ltd
Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021

I wish to provide an overview of the planning process that led to this application being heard at Committee and the extensive consultation undertaken by the applicant over the design development period.

Formal consultation started in December 2018. This was after 2 years of consultation and finally the withdrawal of an application for a major Public Realm scheme incorporating Tyndall Avenue at the request of the City Council. The application was withdrawn after concerns raised by officers and members to the Stopping Up of Tyndall Avenue and the aspiration that the Public Realm should be refocussed around Woodland Road and the New Library. Between December 2018 and the application being formally submitted in January 2020, extensive engagement with the City Council, local residents and external stakeholders took place in the form of exhibitions, 2 pre application enquiries, workshops, presentations and the use of social media to garner opinion and wherever possible, amend and refine the proposals being brought forward.

That consultation process included two workshops with Bristol Grammar School and a series of meetings between representatives of the University and Bristol Grammar School, which culminated in changes to the proposals for Elton Road including the incorporation of formal coach parking, drop off point and enhanced crossings for pedestrians. The consultation process is evidenced in the Statement of Community Involvement that accompanied the application. It was also agreed through a Planning Performance Agreement. In conclusion, a huge effort was made by the University to engage with the public and key stakeholders throughout the design process.

As regards the policy context within which this application should be determined, there is clear Development Plan policy support 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 in principle. Importantly these policies are supplemented by SPD11, adopted in 2006 by Bristol City Council, and which has been implemented over the last 15 years. 3 of the 10 strategic moves within the SPD are satisfied by this proposal, namely: -

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

SPD11 was adopted by Bristol City Council primarily in order to guide and set the parameters for the future development of the precinct. This development fully accords with those objectives. This leaves the interpretation of design, the impact of that design on local heritage assets and the public benefits that accrue from the implementation of this scheme. These points are dealt with by others. However, it is worth reiterating the formal consultation responses from the City Design officers and Bristol Urban Design Forum. The former state that the scheme "delivers an exceptional landmark building exhibiting excellence in design quality". BUDF state in their conclusion to the second presentation of the scheme to them that "there is a paucity of contemporary civic buildings in the city and an outstanding building such as this is long overdue".

I would appeal to members of the Committee to allow this development to take place, which will have far reaching benefits for the city's cultural, educational, social and economic future.

The Significance and importance of Cultural Collections to Bristol

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns

**Statement by Jo Elsworth, University of Bristol, Director of Cultural Collections (Library Services)
Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021**

What are Cultural Collections?

The Cultural Collections are unique and distinctive heritage assets with international significance and national importance. They include the University's Special Collections, the Theatre Collection and an art collection. The collections support and enable research, teaching, cultural partnerships and the University's civic engagement. They are used by a wide range of people including scholars, students, researchers, creative practitioners and members of the public.

Over half of the Cultural Collections' onsite visitors are currently from outside the University and they come from all over the UK and overseas. We also share our collections widely through loans, curated exhibitions and other partnership projects with organisations including Being Brunel (ssGB), Bristol Archives, Feminist Archive (South), Guildhall Art Gallery (London), MShed, National Museum Wales, National Portrait Gallery, National Trust, Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal West of England Academy and V&A. Although the Cultural Collections are open to the public, we are constrained by the size and visibility of our current premises, which are relatively hidden within non-public-facing buildings. By relocating the collections to the New University Library, we will underpin its status as a leading heritage facility that can deliver maximum benefit to the widest range of people.

What is the Centre for Cultural Collections?

The Centre for Cultural Collections will sit at the heart of the new University Library and will provide free publicly accessible reading and viewing rooms, exhibitions spaces and associated events and activities, alongside secure collections storage and conservation, digitisation and creative labs. As well as providing free access to these important collections, we will encourage collaborations between educational institutions (including local schools and colleges), creative and cultural industries and the city.

The Special Collections

Special Collections holds the largest collection of rare books and manuscripts in an academic library in the West Country (over 5 km of materials). This internationally important collection of archives and books dates from the 11th century to the present day. It covers early science, engineering, geology, literature, medicine, ornithology, physics, politics and much more. Together these rare and unique documents capture the history of human thought and endeavour. Some which particularly resonate with the City include the archives of Sir Allen Lane and Penguin Books which trace Britain's most influential publishing house and its leading personalities in 1km of manuscripts and books; the Wildfilm archive which showcases Bristol's vital role in the development of natural history filmmaking through archival film-based material; and the Feminist Archive (South), which documents the history of feminism and local activism. Bristol also owns the Brunel Collection – the papers of an engineering dynasty with unrivalled national recognition and an international profile. The history of the University and its pioneering projects, such as *Children of the 90's*, is also told through the University archive.

The Theatre Collection

The Theatre Collection is one of the most significant and comprehensive collections on the history of British theatre and live art in the world. It is an accredited museum and archive and was recently 'Designated' as an Outstanding Collection by Arts Council England (the highest accolade a non-national collection can achieve). The Collection comprises over 6km of materials and includes artworks, costumes, designs, set models, objects, photographs and props alongside archives of actors, agents, collectors, designers, photographers and writers, and contains material dating from the 18th to 21st centuries. It also holds the archives of many theatre companies, such as Bristol Old Vic, the Old Vic

(London) and Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory, and plays an active role in enabling these theatre companies to preserve and share their heritage with the public. The Collection's wider public interest is due to the artistic, cultural, political and societal themes that reflect theatre's ability to hold a mirror to society.

How will the New University Library provide opportunities for communities across the city?

Transforming and democratising public access to the collections and enabling them to be used for learning, education, research, enjoyment and inspiration by anyone, for free, lies at the heart of our vision for the new University Library. It will give us the ability to provide free onsite access to original material and increase provision of digitised items available onsite and online (although for the vast majority of items it is not feasible to digitise them for curatorial, technical or rights-based reasons).

Most importantly, it will provide a platform for us to work collaboratively, establishing and scaling up sustainable and inclusive relationships with community partners and cultural organisations across the city. To maximise our impact, and prioritise where need is greatest, we have identified key target audiences including Young Bristolians (15-25, especially those not in employment, education or training), Adult Group Visitors (reached through day centres, care settings and older adults at risk of social isolation) and the Creative and Cultural Industries (including artists, makers and creative technologists in the city). Opportunities for all will include collections-based lifelong learning, volunteering and skills development for improved life chances, and co-produced activities to support creativity and enhance wellbeing.

Ultimately, the NUL represents a once in a generation chance to bring these outstanding collections together, share them with the public and provide transformative learning opportunities for decades to come. I urge the committee to support it.

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns
Statement by Professor Judith Squires, University of Bristol, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

The public benefit of a world-class Library and civic space for Bristol

How will the public benefit from the new Library?

Firstly, the New University Library will provide free access to an inspiring programme of high-quality public events and exhibitions, co-produced with local, national, and international partners. In this way, it promises to become a significant new public access point to the University and a landmark cultural destination for Bristol that further enhances the City's innovative and forward-thinking spirit.

The New University Library will also enable our world-class collections to be used freely and openly as a source of inspiration, learning, and enjoyment by everyone in the City. School and college visits, as well as life-long learning, will be welcomed and encouraged with access to our creative digital labs and skills programmes, supporting educational achievement and digitally equipped and engaged citizens. The public space includes a café and 'Changing Places' facility (one of few in Bristol designed to meet the specific needs of individuals unable to use standard accessible toilets) further increasing mobility in the area.

What's special about the collections the new Library will host?

The Centre for Cultural Collections will provide free, public access to our internationally significant and nationally designated and accredited archive and museum collections – including hundreds of thousands of rare and completely unique documents, manuscripts, books, artworks, and artefacts. These will be visible and freely accessible for members of the public and preserved for future generations in environmentally controlled physical storage.

How will the NUL support marginalised and disadvantaged communities?

By inviting local residents, city partners, and school and college visits, there will be greater opportunity to develop partnerships between the University and local organisations, and for members of the public to engage with University activities. Greater engagement will normalise routes to higher education, particularly for school children from the most deprived areas, and provide inspiring and educational experiences for local communities. Together, the freely accessible events, facilities, and collaborative opportunities will democratise access to these unique resources, delivering educational, creative and social outcomes for a far wider, more diverse community than the University is currently able to reach.

Are there any environmental benefits?

By incorporating a new civic square, the proposals will deliver an enriched public open space and cyclist-friendly environment, providing much needed relief from the traffic, noise, and pollution of the surrounding area. This civic square will also make the surrounding streets safer for University staff and students, school children, and the wider public. The physical storage for the Cultural Collections will meet the latest standards for passive environmental control which will significantly reduce current energy consumption.

What about economic impact?

The University of Bristol contributes around £1bn a year to the city-region economy and supports more than 16,000 local jobs. In creating and supporting industries and jobs, the University represents an integral part of the local innovation ecosystem and make a significant contribution towards the City's collective quality of life. A strong research-intensive University with global standing is of huge benefit for the city region. And a world-class Library, as set out in our proposals, is of vital importance to the University's future. It is central to our ability to maintain our reputation in a highly competitive international sector, and so to continue to deliver wider public benefit. The city's planning policies widely support the growth of the University in recognition of these positive impacts. Additionally, National Policy gives 'significant weight' to such proposals in recognition of the wider public benefits generated.

I urge the committee to look again at the application and reconsider the substantial public benefits it will secure for years to come.

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns
Statement by Ethan Osborn-Clarke, University of Bristol student, BSc (Hons) Geography
Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021

As a Bristolian and beneficiary of the University's Bristol Scholars initiative, I'm writing in support of the New University Library (NUL) planning proposal, and to share my views on why the NUL will be so important to meeting both the academic and wellbeing needs of students in Bristol.

The proposal for a new library at the heart of the University fulfils the growing needs and concerns of students and staff, whilst also presenting new opportunities for young people and the residents of Bristol. This proposal also promotes the University's commitment to supporting marginalised and disadvantaged groups. It will enable the city to become more involved with the university, and vice-versa; and offers new chances, new directions and a better future for all who will use it.

Digital poverty is one of the largest challenges facing this generation of students. The UK's sector body for digital education, Jisc, says half of higher education students are digitally disadvantaged. Countless courses require high specification devices that can install and run advanced software, alongside the expectation that all students have access to a fast and secure internet network. This is not the reality. The digital divide is growing, with the Office for Students stating 'digital poverty' risks leaving students behind. A new library which incorporates these facilities would change this narrative, enabling all students, especially the marginalised and disadvantaged, to access the equipment critical to academic success – resources that some students are currently being deprived of following the transition to blended learning. By implementing these facilities, all students will be allowed to flourish and thrive at university, changing the direction of the digital divide.

Further to this, study space within the University is currently at a premium. High-quality study spaces are vital for most students to achieve their potential. The standard of students' living conditions vary widely, and some student accommodation is just not appropriate for supporting effective study. For many, the library is a place of solace to concentrate and produce high quality work that the University expects of its students. In short, it provides a level playing field.

For years, students have voiced concerns over a lack of study space and are becoming increasingly aggravated by this issue. Demand far outstrips supply. The existing situation is especially challenging before and during the exam season. More focussed study space dedicated to learning, where work can be completed independently, or collaboratively, is what students are desperate for. This proposal would accommodate thousands of students, alleviate the demand on other study spaces and help ensure Bristol remains on an equal footing with the UK's, and world's best universities when it comes to its educational and research facilities.

The proposal will also compliment the university's drive to encourage more local students within Bristol to continue their studies within the city. This would be particularly beneficial to the Bristol Scholars programme, the University's scheme to provide support and alternative entry routes onto its degree programmes for local students. I have personally benefited as a Bristol Scholar and an integral part of the programme is the 1:1 guided tutoring received by participants. The vast majority of participants chose to complete their tutoring on campus in university facilities. However, finding study space was, at best, challenging. The NUL proposal addresses this challenge.

It also presents new opportunities for young people who are considering university. By opening the

facilities to them as members of the public, they can become familiar with the university environment; inspiring students to go on to higher education. Ultimately, this shared space will ensure young people who use this facility are better prepared for the transition to university. Understanding how to use the resources and spaces available to them – something that I wish I had more exposure to prior to starting HE.

This is a unique opportunity to build a new legacy at the University of Bristol. One which fosters the growth of students, staff and the surrounding community, creating a high-quality, inclusive and welcoming space for all. This proposal would provide a landmark hub of learning and a place of innovation. I hope the committee will recognise the generational opportunities available to the city and vote in favour of this excellent proposal.

New University Library: road traffic and safety enhancements

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns

Statement by Ed Whitney, Transport Planning Lead for New University Library

Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021

Will the proposals endanger the safety of children crossing Elton Road?

No.

Public safety is at the heart of the road traffic proposals, which have been developed with the needs of all user groups in mind. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit was undertaken by an independent audit team and completed prior to planning submission. The revised proposals, submitted in June 2020, responded to all the issues identified by this audit and the changes were accepted by Transport Development Management of the Council in full.

In recognition of the specific needs of BGS pupils, the proposals include new traffic calming enhancements to mitigate against existing risks to the safety of children crossing Elton Road, and other roads in the vicinity. These measures include two raised crossings proposed for Elton Road, several new high-quality formal crossing points integrated within a raised table junction between Woodland Road, Tyndall Avenue and Elton Road (for each of the three arms of the junction), and additional formal crossing points on St Michael's Park at its junction with Woodland Road; and on Woodland Road immediately to the south of the entrance to University Walk. These are well established features for reducing vehicle speed and improving road safety, particularly for pedestrians of all ages.

The proposals also seek to provide new and better coach parking for BGS away from the corner of Elton and Woodland Road, representing an improvement to the current situation by improving visibility and decongesting this important crossing. The small number of additional vehicles forecast does not represent a material increase in risk to children, staff, students, or the public in crossing Elton Road. Traffic levels on Elton Road, both now and as forecast are also of such low magnitudes that they are not and will not contribute to any significant air quality impacts.

Will the pedestrianisation proposals for part of Woodland Road lead to a significant increase in traffic elsewhere?

No.

A robust Transport Assessment has been produced, the findings of which have been accepted by Transport Development Management of the Council. The forecast changes in traffic flows on adjacent roads, including those around Bristol Grammar School, are anticipated to be relatively small – in the busiest period of the day (the morning rush hour) this would only be approximately 1 additional vehicle per minute on Elton Road, on average. Traffic data collected through surveys for the project show that a high proportion of traffic flows on Elton Road are related to school pick-up/drop-off activity. Outside of these periods between 9am-3pm, there are, on average, just 80 vehicles using the road per hour, which is minimal in traffic terms. In this period the impact of any additional traffic would be negligible.

With respect to St Michael's Hill, in the morning peak hour, the closure of Woodland Road is forecast to lead to approximately 2-3 additional vehicles per minute southbound, and 1 additional vehicle per minute northbound, on average. This is based on a conservative set of assumptions around the rerouting of traffic within a defined study area.

The proposals also enable increased travel by public transport, through the increased capacity of the 'bus hub' on Tyndall Avenue, as well as by walking and cycling. The removal of the existing 47 University parking spaces currently situated within The Hawthorns, with only disabled parking re-

provided, will also reduce the overall number of University staff travelling by car to the area.

Will the traffic calming measures cause disruption to parents dropping off their children by car?

No.

It is important to emphasise that the school will remain completely accessible by car for those parents wishing to use this mode travel. Routes to BGS from the South, West and East will be completely unaffected by the scheme. From the north, a small change in access route will be required, either via Elmdale Road or St Michael's Hill. Given the school's catchment area is large, the additional distance and journey times resulting from these diversions will be minimal.

In addition, following careful consultation with BGS, we have done our utmost to address or mitigate all concerns raised. This includes providing additional on-street parking on Elton Road and Elmdale Road in order to retain amenity for BGS, its parents and pupils, and other road users. More than this, the scheme also proposes several new coach parking bays on Elton Road and Woodland Road. This improves capacity for coach movements associated with BGS and removes the existing necessity for coaches to park illegally in the nearby bus stops. We have worked extensively with BGS over the 30 months of this application, to meet their needs whilst also seeking to improve this part of the city for all.

It is simply not correct to state that we have not engaged with BGS – it is correct to say we sought to balance the needs of a successful school and other users.

Do these proposals represent a 'land grab' by the University?

No.

While the University is committed to making a significant investment in public realm and transport infrastructure, (including a landmark new civic space, and a new bus hub on Tyndall Avenue providing enhanced facilities and improved journey times), land within the current highway boundary would not be transferred to the University under a stopping-up order or by any other means. Indeed, the land would remain entirely in the ownership of the Council. Furthermore, no part of the proposed new development will overhang the public highway.

I urge the committee to look again at the application and reconsider the substantial public benefits it will enable for years to come.

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns

Statement by Barra Mac Ruairi, University of Bristol, Chief Property Officer

Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021

How does the Library fit in with local character?

The proposed library is a positive addition to local character and is policy compliant. The council's own Supplementary Planning Document, SPD 11, requires a landmark seven storey building. This is a landmark seven storey building. SPD 11. states that a new building on the Hawthorns should take the opportunity to deliver a distinctive landmark building of the highest architectural quality, as part of the strategic masterplan for the future of the University. Alongside your expert Planning Officers, City Design Group, and the independent Urban Design Forum – we believe the proposals for the new Library meets policy objectives.

The Library's architects, Hawkins Brown and Schmidt Hammer Lassen, are both world-renowned architectural practices with a long history of delivering landmark, critically acclaimed projects. Throughout their work on the Library, both localised street and long-distance views have been continuously and carefully considered during design development, taking into account the scale of the building and local topography. The proposed scheme has been considered against all relevant guidance contained within Bristol City Council's Urban Living SPD – Making successful places at higher densities.

The library is a contemporary addition to the cityscape. Bristol can point to great civic architecture of the past, but unlike other UK core cities, it has a very poor representation of world leading contemporary architecture.

The Bristol Urban Design Forum (the city's independent experts on these matters) stated: "There is... a paucity of contemporary civic buildings in the city and an outstanding building such as this is long overdue. As society seeks to make university life a more open and inclusive place, this building could make a manifest contribution to wellbeing in university life ... The library is set to become not only a great place to visit, but also an emblem that talks about the quality and evolution of the city, our commitment and investment in education, and the healthy future of our young people."

In order to inform the material palette of the library analysis of the immediate and wider context was carried out. This demonstrated a distinct correlation between building use and external material with the dominant material used for civic and institutional buildings in Bristol being limestone. The principal external material selected for the library is ashlar limestone.

What have the Councils City Design Group said of the project?

In addition to the recommendations of the Committee's planning officers, the Council's City Design Group (CDG) support the development of the new library facilities and laud the ambition of the project, seeing this as an opportunity for a valuable addition to the city's assets, delivering a landmark building exhibiting excellence in design quality. CDG add that exceptional quality is of vital importance to justify the scale and massing of this new landmark building, and "this quality is exhibited in the design and detailing of the scheme. The architecture is seen as presenting a considered response to the surrounding context. It presents a clear articulation of base, middle and top with well-proportioned massing."

Both Historic England and the BCC Conservation Officer have said there is a 'moderate level of less than substantial harm' to the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area and Bristol Grammar School. Why should the new Library go ahead?

Historic England and the Conservation Officer are tasked to identify the level of harm that may be caused by a development. They are not tasked with concluding whether the 'public benefits' outweigh these 'harms' – and they have not done so. This exercise is for experienced Planning Officers and Committee Members to make. Your planning officers state that, in their expertise, "the proposed development would give rise to significant public benefits which outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' identified."

I concur – the public benefits of a civic building that houses unique world-class collections, accessible to the people of Bristol and beyond, which conserves our history, far outweighs any harm to heritage caused by the project, as stated in the advice of your officers.

I ask the committee to carefully reconsider their thoughts on refusal and move to grant consent.

Public Forum Statement for the Development Control Committee B meeting on 17th March 2021 regarding the refusal of planning permission for application no. 20/00433/F, The Hawthorns Woodland Road Bristol BS8 1UQ.

As the committee are meeting to discuss this application once more I would like to take the opportunity to address a fundamental aspect of the application which seems to have been downplayed.

During the planning committee meeting on the 25th February 2021 I heard a reference to SPD11 being used to lay the foundations for approving the planning application. I think that it in fact it highlights the failings of the application and why it is correct to reject the application.

SPD11 is the University of Bristol Strategic Masterplan¹ and was published in July 2006. The following brief quotes are from that document with my own commentary supporting that argument:

“The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide the University and the people of Bristol with a clear framework for the development of the precinct over the next 10 to 15 years.” “The Masterplan was adopted by Bristol City Council as an SPD and will remain an accepted document for the development of the Precinct over the next 10-15 years”.

We are at the tail end of that period and the University is clearly running behind if you look at their intended slate of developments, but I would argue that this document still stands as the only documented “agreement” between the city and the University regarding future development.

The Masterplan focusses on the development of the central Precinct area. Strategic Move 9 (pp66-67) describes the re-development of the Hawthorns site. The Masterplan proposes that *“The new building will address the scale and proportion of its surrounding context and provide a positive contribution to the character of Tyndall Place”*. Five design principles are listed:

1: *“Site Area/Building Footprint: It is important for the new development to respect the building lines of existing developments on Elton Road and Woodlands Road.”* Although the application squeezes the building to fit the Hawthorn site boundaries it ignores such lines – by contrast, applications to construct multi-storey extensions in the front gardens of the villas would surely be rejected.

2: *“Building Massing and Scale: A range of design options have been explored. It is believed that the site could accommodate a development of between 3 and 7 storeys to allow building heights to step up to reach the height of Senate House opposite. Bearing in mind the scale of the new development should relate sympathetically to the scale of neighbouring properties.”* The included visualisation does just that with a successive increase in height of structures from the villas on Elton Road up to (but not exceeding) the height of the Senate building. This is in stark contrast to the bulky, tall arrangement of boxes of the current design which erupts from the ground, unsympathetically dwarfing neighbouring villas and exceeds the height of Senate House.

3: *“Materials: It is recognised that the natural materials of the existing buildings make a contribution to the streetscape and the potential to incorporate these within a new building should be carefully considered.”* If those materials were “carefully considered” they also seem to have been ignored.

¹ https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34520/spd11-masterplan-graphic_0.pdf/a46b15f1-beb8-4f77-9f3a-5d4d0cba6fd3

4: *“Landscape: The design of external spaces is extremely important for the site and must be integral to proposals for Tyndall Place.”* Tyndall Place was the name given to the street area adjacent to the proposed development. As depicted on page 79, all surrounding roads would maintain two-way vehicle and cycle routes with no road closures which is contrary to the current proposal.

5: *“Access and Servicing: It will be important for a servicing strategy to be developed which enables efficient servicing and minimal disruption to adjoining streets. Suitable vehicular access may be achieved to the rear of the site from either Woodland Road or Elton Road.”* I would argue that closing a road and changing traffic flow does not make servicing the building any easier and certainly not with “minimal disruption to adjoining streets”.

In addition, I would like to draw attention to the amount of floorspace. The application states that the proposed development delivers approximately 14,320 m² of floor area. Appendix Six of the Masterplan states that the new building area would have gross area of 9,180 m², with an estimated net useable area of 6,430 m². This is yet another example of how far the application has deviated from stated intent.

A “landmark” building i.e., tall, was suggested for Strategic Move 8 on Tyndall Avenue in the Masterplan, but not for the Hawthorns site. In Appendix 3 of the report to committee before you now, the Urban Living SPD (ULSPD) is used to justify using the Hawthorns site for a landmark building. I find it both confusing and disappointing that application of the ULSPD has been used to override the stated objectives of SPD11.

I understand that even the best plans change, especially those drawn up 15 years ago – notably there is no mention of the large Temple Quarter development which has materialised over the past few years. However, the five stated design principles remain a sound basis for the redevelopment of the Hawthorns site. Principles that the current application appears to have ignored. If the University wishes to deviate so substantially from SPD11 then I suggest it is time for the council and the University to agree on a new Masterplan. In the meantime, I am thankful that the committee saw fit to reject this application and hope that they will not waver in this regard.

Rycharde Hawkes
Resident

12th March 2021

Planning Application: 20/00433/F

Following on from the planning meeting for the above on the 25th February I would like to add to the contents of my previous statement regarding this application. After listening to the planning proposals that were provided by the University of Bristol and questions that were subsequently raised these are my further arguments in opposition.

Councillor Kye Dudd informed the meeting that should this proposal be approved there were significant highways issues that need to be addressed and that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would be a requirement for a point closure and that such an application was a high risk and should be borne in mind when the panel considered the proposals. A question then followed from a Councillor on the panel regarding the permanence of such a closure and my reference to a land grab, there didn't seem to be an adequate answer from those present, so I have copied and pasted this from Bristol City Council's own website for clarity. You will see that to either create or revoke a TRO is a lengthy process and subject to stringent procedures.

To create a TRO

- Consultation with the emergency services and other public bodies takes place. Local interest groups such as residents and traders may be consulted where appropriate.
- Advertisement of the TRO then takes place by placing a notice in the local press and displaying notices in the roads affected. Objections are then considered through the appropriate council procedure before it is decided how the matter will be taken forward.
- The TRO will then be formally made and introduced. The entire process can take many months to complete especially if objections result in the TRO being changed and re-advertised.

TROs can remain in operation indefinitely. If the council needs to modify or revoke a TRO, it must follow the same procedure as was used to create the TRO.

I believe that my argument stands that this is a land grab.

There was another question of how many residents actually lived in the local proximity, to which there was no real response. So, I've gathered together some data from Highbury Residents' Association of which I am a member. Whilst HRA covers a relatively small proportion of St Michael's Hill on the Western side, as well as Paul St, Ralph Mews, Highbury and Osborne Villas and Tyndalls Park Mews. The estimate from the group is that there are around 400+ residents (including but not solely students) in the stretch of houses on St Michael's Hill from Tyndall Park Road down to where it joins Horfield Road and all the side roads on the western side of the hill. This does not include the High Kingsdown Estate and flats to the north and east of St Michael's Hill, which would arguably increase the local resident population considerably.

Therefore, whilst Tyndall Avenue, Elton Road and Woodland Road may in part not appear populated there is a considerable resident population within striking distance of the proposed road closure. I stated in my 1-minute speech on the 25th February that any changes to road and traffic flows in this central area has to be considered in a holistic way and consideration off the impact of traffic on St Michael's Hill and other adjoining roads is of great concern as they are the main through roads to St Michael's Maternity Hospital, Bristol Royal Infirmary, the Children's Hospital and the Oncology Department. The proposed road closures would have a detrimental effect on the accessibility to all these NHS buildings. St Michael's Hill is also the route to two local primary schools, a very large comprehensive school as well as Bristol Grammar School.

The third point I would like to counter was the repeated reference to the economic benefits of the UoB and its importance as a global academic establishment. Firstly, I think to prioritise global prestige over the impact on local considerations and the city is questionable. Who knows what the student demographic will be as we emerge from this pandemic, and whether the emphasis and reliance on an international student population with the accompanying benefit of larger tuition and accommodation fees will remain? Will that be the economic model for education going forward? Also, whilst the UoB may boast of the economic benefits it brings to the city, it could well be argued that the fall in council tax receipts due to a large student population and the increased pressure on housing costs have been detrimental to local residents. Take a stroll along St Michael's Hill, in the 28 years I have lived there we have lost a butcher, greengrocer, florist, a locally run pub with another pub struggling to keep its doors open and numerous dilapidated and closed shop fronts, in their place coffee shops and takeaways abound. Even the nearby Whiteladies Road, Park Street and Queens Road have a considerable number of shop and restaurant closures and this was before Covid struck.

Finally, whilst we are told that the proposed overlarge library will have public access and available space, I'd ask whether the ability of the public to use or hire space would be free? Apart from access to the theatre collection I'm pretty certain the local population will not be able to access or loan documents, books etc. or to utilise the research aspect of the library, they certainly couldn't when I was a postgrad student.

This entire proposal from the massing and design to the proposed road closures has been ill considered and nothing I have heard during the application hearing has done anything to change my mind. In fact, hearing the other objections has only strengthened my feelings on this.

I continue to strongly object to this application.

Hawthorns

Good morning

I would be grateful if you could accept my statement below in respect of the proposed redevelopment of the Hawthorns building on Woodland Road.

I can fully understand why Bristol university want to redevelop the building - having been inside I'm aware how unfit for purpose it is.

That said, the proposed development is such a massive change to the building design, with no regard for local heritage, I am pleased the Planning Committee voted to reject the proposal.

In Queen Square some of the properties were successfully redeveloped about 10 years ago by retaining the facade and demolishing/ rebuilding the rest of the structure. By using this approach, the new buildings managed to successfully combine spacious modern interiors whilst retaining the heritage. Perhaps Bristol university could use this approach to the redevelopment?

I'm also very concerned about traffic flow. At the planning meeting we heard that the new traffic arrangements will only have a little impact on traffic flow. Yet at the same time the building will house many more people including the public. So where are all those people going to come from? Elton Road already backs up from The Triangle onto Woodland Road and surrounding roads. Diverting all Woodland Road traffic (from St Michaels direction) down Elton Road will only end up in more traffic jams. I think Woodland Road should remain open to allow for movement of traffic through the area.

Many thanks

Gillian Tomlinson

Hawthorns

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to strong object against the university application to develop the Hawthorns site. My objections are:

1) As a parent with two young children at BGS school I am very concerned about the increase in traffic volume around the school which will be generated from this development. The area is already busy and congested and with the new road layout more cars will be forced down Elton Road. This is a road that young children cross on a daily basis to get to the main school and would not be safe with an increased volume of cars. The new road layout and closing roads to cars will enhance congestion and parking problems making it unsafe and unhealthy to walk around when dropping my children at school on a daily basis.

2) The building itself is ugly and too big for the site. It is not in keeping with the surrounding area and does not fit into the heritage of the BGS buildings and other buildings in the surrounding area. I do not want this building overlooking the school classrooms and playgrounds where my children are attending school. The design and size of the building is unnecessary and only serves the university's benefit rather than that of the surrounding residents and those who use the area multiple times a day.

Thanks

Mrs Claire Probert

Hawthorns

Good morning,

I am writing to register my concern over the proposed development of the University of Bristol Hawthorn site. I have many concerns and objections but in particular I would like to note the following:

Traffic - the proposal will force traffic to other areas around the site increasing congestion and pollution and make it more dangerous on other roads. Elton Road has many children crossing, from the school in the area, the road on multiple occasions during the day. Their safety will be greatly reduced.

The area - the area has many historic and beautiful buildings which would be compromised by the redevelopment. I was very concerned that in one report it was noted the area was 'run down'. This really surprised me and made me think the developers had no insight into the area!

The design - the building is too overpowering for the area and not in keeping. Unlike some modern developments it does not blend in or compliment the surrounding Historic buildings. Also why such a large library when surely course material is found online and more students are able to study from home?

The University of Bristol are developing an area near Temple Meads, surely this would have far more space for such a large structure?

Kind regards, Sarah Bann

To whom it may concern.

I am a parent of a child at Bristol Grammar School and I live nearby. I would like to voice my strong objection to the proposed development of the Hawthorn site.

The scale of the building proposed would entirely dwarf those that it surrounds. Nearby buildings that are already highly valued for their architecture, beauty and heritage will be entirely diminished and over-shadowed. The loss will be irreplaceable.

The traffic disruption and diversions that this enormous development will inevitably cause will have a huge impact on everyone within the local area, not least the Bristol Grammar School environment. I am very concerned about the safety and wellbeing of my six-year-old child as he crosses from one of the school sites to another. Again, if any child's life is endangered by the traffic re-route, the loss could be irreplaceable.

For these main reasons, the proposed development should not be allowed to go ahead in its current form. There is a great risk that a highly valued and historic environment - or possibly even a life - will be lost forever.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Perkins

Hawthorns

I would like to make a written statement in support of the committee voting it was 'minded to refuse' the Hawthorns New Library development proposal.

To sum up very briefly I feel this is already a hugely controversial building with much objection and as such instead of bringing the community together and serving as a landmark building of public benefit it will cause division, difficulties and problems for so many people and future generations. I object on the basis of the size, mass and design of the building which is completely incongruous to the surrounding area. The build fails to be sympathetic with it's surroundings which I believe will be of enormous detriment to the area and will overshadow many areas of historical interest including the Great Hall at Bristol Grammar School.

The traffic issues have been highlighted and this clearly needs much more research and thought. Building such a large build which will increase congestion, traffic and fumes near a school seems very harmful and against the idea of clean air near schools. I would also add clean air is important for residents, pupils and students/staff at the University. The safety of the school children and pedestrians does not seem to have been fully considered.

I therefore strongly support the committee in their refusal of the build and hope that they will continue to oppose the build of which supposed benefits I believe do not outweigh the significant negatives.

Thank you!

Kind regards,

Scott Rayner

Hawthorns

Dear Committee Members,

As a residents of Bristol who commute into town for work (BRI) and to drop and collect our children to and from school, we strongly object the proposed planning by the university in the grounds that traffic on the surrounding roads will be increased significantly and cause negative impact on commuters and residents alike. This will have a huge impact on the lives of those whose journeys to and from work or school depend wholly on using these roads.

At the last meeting, the committee member for the university's proposal did not and could not give an idea of how chockablock the surroundings road will get during rush hour or indeed provide any data to support his argument. The increase in traffic will affect amongst others, workers at St Michael's Hospital, The Bristol Royal Infirmary and parents who come in from out of town to drop/collect their children. As well as staff at these schools. Most of these workers are key workers.

Unless you use these roads on a daily basis it is difficult to appreciate the negative impact it will cause on those who do.

Lastly, the council has a duty to safeguard children in its jurisdiction. The proposed plan will undoubtedly send more traffic down to Elton Road, where the smallest members of our community use/cross the roads several times a day, and to add to this, they will have to endure increased levels of pollution. This ought to be of paramount consideration to the committee when it is making its decision.

With best wishes,
Mrs and Mrs Mussa

Hawthorns

To Whom it may concern,

In advance of your meeting this week regarding ratifying the decision made at the last Development Committee B meeting to reject the plans for the new University development at the Hawthorns site, please can it be noted that I wholeheartedly agree with the decision on the three grounds mentioned - building design, heritage and grave traffic concerns.

Please can I also say that I think the councillors involved were well briefed I was surprised how little of the presentation from the planning officer at the last meeting was countered with equivalent air time around the objections to the plans. Maybe this is the norm but it did surprise me nonetheless. I hope that the decision to ratify tomorrow is made and that the university goes away and considers more how it can work with its communities in a more constructive way.

Kind regards
Emma Downing

Hawthorns

Dear Madam/Sir,

I wanted to add a statement about the Hawthornes development.

As a parent of a child at Bristol Grammar School who is five years old I have many concerns about the proposed development.

Firstly, in terms of traffic affected by this change. Currently the traffic in this area of Bristol generally flows because of the alternative routes to approach the school. This means there is not stalling and stationary traffic polluting the area. The proposed changes will reduce these routes which will increase traffic and create bottle necks so that when my child is out playing in the playground and in the morning she will be exposed to more pollution. The city council has already identified this as an issue and this would make it worse.

Secondly, the design of this space will completely change the feel and look of this area ruining the existing culture and feel of the surrounds. It will make this area seem like a campus rather than a street and community of people learning and working in the area - schools, businesses, etc.

Please consider these points in decisions this week. We will likely move schools if this development goes ahead.

Many thanks,

Claire Stewart-Hall

The student need for access to a world-class Library and study space

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns

Statement by Ed Fay, University of Bristol, Director of Library Services

Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021

Why do students need access to study space?

Libraries are often called the “beating heart” of a University campus and provide spaces in which communities of learners undertake independent study and work collaboratively in group projects to share and develop knowledge. Libraries are inclusive, welcoming spaces – non-commercial and non-judgemental – where challenging and rigorous intellectual debate can provide a safe environment for marginalised groups and individuals. It has become clear through the Covid pandemic that the most deprived members of the student community have the most need for University facilities and that access to study space is a key component of mental health, well-being, and educational achievement.

Why can't students access everything online in digital formats?

The University invests a huge amount in providing digital access to learning content, including books and journals, but cannot provide everything that might conceivably be required by students and researchers. Digital access can provide convenient availability for many people to support aspects of their learning, but cannot provide access to everything, nor access for everyone. Some publications are only available in print format and physical formats can provide greater accessibility for students with specific needs and neurodiversities. The Centre for Cultural Collections will provide access to rare books and completely unique archives and museum objects which are central to teaching across many subjects. Importantly, not all students have access to the technology and connectivity required to access digital content – laptops and reliable Wi-Fi – and the New University Library will provide technology-rich spaces within which students can engage with digital content.

What are the benefits provided by world-class facilities for students?

The New University Library will provide spaces which are designed to foster well-being – in the use of natural light and diversity of spaces including low-distraction study rooms and flexibility for social and group study with peers. The spaces are future-looking with flexible uses in mind as student learning expectations and behaviours evolve post-pandemic. Our experience of supporting these changing requirements during the last year reinforces the importance of physical interaction to a sense of belonging and well-being. The digital and blended future requires physical access to equipment and creative labs which will enable access to the latest technology. Publicly accessible spaces will enable exhibitions of University research and student work that provide opportunities for engagement with local residents and communities. These innovative and open spaces will attract the next generation of scholars and creatives to the University and the City.

How does the building provide opportunities for collaboration?

The building will provide open and accessible spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange of ideas. Public access to this environment will encourage and enable encounters and interactions between students and local community residents. This includes opportunities for peer-working and volunteering with schools outreach, life-long learning and skills development. At the heart of campus, the New University Library will be a nexus for the exchange of knowledge, mutual development of understanding and new ideas, all further democratised as a public access point to the University.

What library resources will the library house?

The building will provide 2,000 study seats, which will take the overall ratio of study seats to students to 1:6. This will be broadly in line with the provision of leading UK universities. The building will also house 420,000 books and 70,000 journals as well as around half of the University's cultural collections. In total, this is around 30% of the overall University collection – the majority of our collections will be stored offsite, for retrieval on request, based on rigorous criteria of use reflecting the best digital provision currently available and sustainability impact assessment to minimise the transport of material around the city. Exhibition galleries and creative labs will provide students with opportunities to develop and showcase their learning and to engage with local residents and communities.

I strongly urge the committee to look again at the application and reconsider the very real public benefits that will accrue for years to come.

Application Number: 20/00433/F – New University Library, Hawthorns
Statement by David Ion, Bristol SU, Undergraduate Education Officer
Development Control Committee B, 17TH March 2021

I'm writing as a representative of Bristol's students to urge Development Control Committee B to support the proposed New University Library (NUL). Libraries are at the heart of the university experience, providing high-quality silent spaces to tackle assignments in peace, levelling the playing field of digital inequality, and providing important communal spaces for group work and socialising. Lack of study spaces in libraries has been a key issue for the SU for many years, and with the University likely to maintain aspects of online learning and assessment after the pandemic, the need for high-quality study spaces is only going to grow. NUL is a truly inspiring project that will alleviate the massive pressure that has been put on existing library spaces following a recent period of university growth, massively improving students' experience of this cornerstone of the university experience.

To understand the need for NUL, it's useful to consider why and how students use libraries. The primary function of a library for a student is as a place to 'knuckle down' and get on with hours of undisturbed work. Libraries provide a quiet, warm space to work with high quality and secure Wifi and access to vital learning resources (many of which are not available online). It is so important that the university provides these spaces because many of the city's HMOs are cold, cramped, and have poor Wifi connections. Libraries are often the only viable alternative to working from a bedroom, so when the decrepit conditions of many of the city's HMOs are considered, it becomes clear why there is such high demand for study space. This demand is not being met by the current library provision, especially in assessment periods where students are far from guaranteed a library seat. Current spaces are already at breaking point, and with the possibility of student numbers increasing in the years ahead, there is an urgent need for expansion in the University's high-quality library study space provision.

University libraries also serve a valuable social role. A walk around the Arts and Social Sciences library ('the ASS' to students) in pre-Covid times would make it abundantly clear that the ground floor is as much a social café as a serious study centre. The ASS Café is used for a variety of activities, from meeting with peers to discuss work and group projects to society committee meetings. Opening up more of these transitory, social spaces around campus is vital to making campus feel more homely and welcoming. As well as providing a valuable civic space to members of the general public, NUL would provide another much-needed hub of student life on campus.

The experience of the pandemic has proven that providing adequate library space is fundamental to the University meeting its students' needs and to bridge digital inequalities that exist between students. Social distancing measures have seen library capacity drop by 80%, leaving many students no choice but to work from home. In the past week alone, I have received 50 emails from students whose mental health is struggling because they aren't able to rely on the library to work on their coursework, and have instead been trapped in low-quality HMOs. This has a disproportionate impact on widening participation (WP) students from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds, who are less likely to have access to suitable study space or effective digital equipment at home, and so are more reliant on the libraries to be able to complete work to the best of their ability. The sharp decrease in library capacity this year has highlighted how vital they are to students from all backgrounds being able to thrive in their studies at university.

72.7% of the University's student intake is currently drawn from state schools – higher than many of its Russell Group peers. The University rightly wants to go even further than this and support more prospective students from underrepresented backgrounds to access and thrive at the University. **The committee has a real opportunity to support the University in this ambition**, and to help level the playing field and ensure that all students, no matter their background or personal circumstance, have access to the vital technology, resources, and high-quality study space they need to reach their potential.

Libraries were massively oversubscribed pre-Covid, and we've seen this year that without access to libraries, many students' simply do not have the right conditions in their HMOs to learn effectively. Student demand for access to libraries is only going to increase in importance over the next few years, and so it is imperative that the University can increase spaces available by completing its fantastic and inspiring NUL project. Libraries everywhere seem to be closing permanently. You have an opportunity to help reverse this trend in Bristol. I urge the committee to look again at the application and reconsider the real public and student benefits it will enable for years to come.