

UPDATE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL B COMMITTEE OF 25TH FEBRUARY 2021

Background

Members will recall that at the previous meeting of this Committee on 25th February 2021, a planning application (ref: 20/00433/F) to redevelop the Hawthorns site for a new University of Bristol Library was considered. The committee report from that meeting is attached at the end of this addendum.

At the meeting members voted on a motion to defer a decision on the application but that the Committee was minded to refuse the application. This was on the grounds that the design and massing of the proposed building was unacceptable, that the harmful impact on heritage assets was unacceptable and not outweighed by the public benefits arising from the development, and because the development would result in unacceptable highway safety issues. The application was deferred to allow officers to prepare formal reasons for refusal, with the application intended to return to the following DC B Committee meeting for determination.

Design and Heritage Issues

Comments were made at the meeting to the effect that the design, size and scale of the proposed building would be unsympathetic to the existing character and appearance of the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area and that its size would dominate the wider setting of the Bristol Grammar School adjoining the site. In view of this, Members are advised that while two reasons for refusal were put forward in the motion, it is difficult to separate the issue of design with that of the impact on heritage assets as the design directly leads to the harm. It is suggested that the two issues are merged and the following reason for refusal is used if Members remain minded to refuse the application:

By reason of its siting, scale, massing, form and design, the proposed library would fail to respect the local pattern and grain of development or contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area. The proposal would result in an unsympathetic form of development that would result in less than substantial harm to identified heritage assets; the setting of the listed Bristol Grammar School and the character and appearance of the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area. The public benefits associated with the proposed development are not considered to outweigh the identified harm. The proposal therefore conflicts with guidance contained within Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; S12 and S16 of the NPPF, policies BCS21 and BCS22 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011, and DM26, DM27, DM28, DM29 and DM31 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014.

Transport Issues

Transport officers' professional assessment of this application is that when comparing the existing situation to the development proposal, and in the context of the financial and physical interventions proposed, the development is not considered to give rise to unacceptable transport and highway safety issues.

Given this situation, and having regard to the fact that the Local Planning Authority does not have responsibility for the implementation of the transport measures (such as Traffic Regulation Orders), a transport reason for refusal would be difficult to defend at any appeal.

If, however, Committee members remain of the opinion to reject the above advice and refuse planning permission on transport and/or highway safety grounds, one or more of the following reasons could be applied to this decision, depending on the particular transport related issues that Members consider are materially harmful:

- *The proposed development fails to ensure the provision of safe access to the highway and the safety of surrounding streets for all sections of the community, contrary to policies BCS10 and DM23 of the Bristol Local Plan.*
- *The proposed development would result in negative impacts such as excessive traffic volumes, fumes and noise, contrary to policy BCS10 of the Bristol Local Plan.*
- *The proposed development fails to provide or contribute towards the provision of measures to mitigate its impact and overcome unsatisfactory transport conditions, contrary to policies BCS11 and DM23 of the Bristol Local Plan.*