

STATEMENT A18 – Nick Townsend

The planning officer views a pub as just a place to have a drink with friends, claiming 'there are numerous other places to have a drink' if the Windmill is converted into flats. However, community pubs like the Windmill are far more than that. The Windmill provides a social space, a place to make connections, for conversations, for birthday celebrations, for food, for coffee in the morning, to show films and much more. The Windmill is at the heart of the community, providing belonging and attachment, and so can't be replaced by another pub ten or fifteen minutes' walk away. A local is called a local for a reason. If you take away a community asset, then people will become more divided and lose that sense of belonging. Furthermore, when a pub goes, other community assets, such as shops, often follow.

The planning officer lists 14 alternative pubs to the Windmill that he claims are within easy walking distance. However, it seems he isn't sure about this as several of the pubs named in his previous report are not included on the new list while some new ones have been added. Amongst these is the White Heart, a sports pub in Bedminster Parade. He reports this as being 643m away from the Windmill, but this distance could only be achieved by cutting across Bedminster Green or walking down Whitehouse Lane, and both of these routes are poorly lit and extremely unsafe. The 'safest' route is via Hereford Street, which would increase the distance to 730 m. However, this is also very poorly lit and totally deserted, with bushes on one side (see photo below)



Hereford Street, Bedminster

Once at the corner of Hereford Street, the pedestrian would then have to turn right and walk along Dalby Avenue, one of the most polluted roads in Bristol. This road is also deserted right to the corner of Bedminster Parade, with the tower block of St Catherine's across the road and the trees and

shrubs of Hereford Street car park and Bedminster Green on the right (see photo below)



Dalby Avenue, Bedminster

From the corner of Dalby Avenue and Bedminster parade, anyone who wants to visit the White Heart must walk 200m through a crime hot spot to the White Heart Avon and Somerset Police the following figures for crime on this stretch this year, including anti-social behaviour, violence and sexual offences, robbery, theft and public order crime: 32 in May, 28 in June, 28 in July, 31 in August, and 20 in September. That makes an average of 27 per month, or approximately one crime a day in this stretch of the route.

The Manual of the Streets document quoted by the planning officer suggests that 800m is an acceptable distance if the 'walking experience' is good. CAMRA cite a different government document which suggests that 200m is desirable, while it suggests 400m is acceptable. It is clear that this route, which is almost 800m, very unpleasant and does not provide a good walking experience. However, even worse is that this route is simply not safe, especially for women on their own. After recent high-profile crimes, making life as safe as possible for women at night should be an absolute priority. The lack of consideration for women's safety is very concerning and I know has created much anger in the community. Furthermore, all the routes off Windmill Hill are very much like this. If I am being generous, the planning officer may not have been aware of this safety issue as it appears that he hasn't visited the area at night and instead has relied totally on Google Maps. However, now it has been brought to his attention, and assuming he agrees that all the roads leading off Windmill Hill at night are unsafe, he should he remove all pubs but one from his list?