

B3 Statement to Development Control A Committee – 21st December 2022

22/00805F 155-165 West St Bedminster BS3 3PN (Item 9b on agenda)

I made a similar statement to your meeting on 16th November when this application was deferred. I remain supportive of the proposed development and note the clear recommendation for approval in the officer's report.

To set the scene, this site is a disused car showroom, adjacent garage and surrounding area fronting West St (A38). The previous commercial use of the properties (car showroom and garage) has ceased.

I am concerned that these empty buildings will decay and become a magnet for anti-social behaviour given that some of the proposed development area lacks visibility from the street.

The developer has engaged with the local community and kept me updated throughout. We have discussed various improvements and he has been receptive - incorporating several new measures into the proposals, including the funding of a car club bay and vehicle to discourage car ownership.

Student accommodation remains a controversial topic and I take the view that dedicated accommodation for students can help relieve pressure on the existing local housing stock. There is much sub-division of family homes leading to poor quality living space and additional parking pressures in residential streets. These homes are usually lost to the housing market for good.

I also endorse the innovative use of modern methods of construction as the build time and disruption for local people and businesses will be much reduced. This also helps ensure a consistency of build quality and high levels of energy efficiency.

I have discussed with the applicant how he might contact the Bristol Advanced Construction Skills Centre (in Hengrove) and assess whether an apprenticeship or similar on-site learning about MMC construction could be facilitated.

We have also discussed management of the building, particularly after hours, and I have been reassured about the arrangements in place.

The applicant also proposes to trial a shared workspace aimed at local SMEs and people working from home who would welcome a separate place to work. This is another example of adopting proposals from residents.

The West Street area is the focus of a strong community effort to promote and regenerate. The residents of this development (if approved) will provide additional customers (and possibly employees) for the local independent businesses in this neighbourhood hub.

I therefore support your officer's recommendation to approve, subject to conditions.

Cllr Mark Bradshaw

Labour Co-op Councillor for Bedminster

19th December 2022