

Public Forum

D C Committee B

2.00 pm 8th March 2023



- 1. Members of the Development Control Committee B**
Councillors: Ani Stafford-Townsend (Chair), Chris Windows, Fabian Breckels, Andrew Brown, Lesley Alexander, Lorraine Francis, Katja Hornchen, Guy Poultney and Richard Eddy (substitute for Lesley Alexander)
- 2. Officers:**
Gary Collins - Development Management, Peter Westbury, Matthew Cockburn, Luke Phillips, Stephen Rockey, Phillipa Howson, John Smith, DSO



No.	Speaking	Name	
		A – 21/02794/F Stokes Croft	
A1	Yes	Steve Mardall	
A2	No	Mike Davies	
A3	Yes?	Tony Caci	
A4	Yes?	Robert Guy	
A5	Yes?	Pegasus Group	
A6	Yes?	Drue Mock	
A7	Yes	Bentleigh Burgess	
A8	Yes	Cllr Tim Wye	
		B – 22/02730/X Hartcliffe Way – No statements submitted	



Application Ref. 21/02794/F - Stokes Croft

Dear Councillors

I am writing in support of the proposed scheme as a local architect, with no vested interest in the site or development.

My practice – Ascent Architecture, has been based in Stokes Croft, almost immediately opposite the site for nearly 20 years.

Stokes Croft is a colourful, vibrant and eclectic place whose uniqueness and character needs to be preserved. However I don't think this means preventing investment and development.

Having looked carefully at the proposed development drawings I am perplexed as to why this is being recommended for refusal.

In recent years the site's Stokes Croft frontage has been greatly improved... with new retailers like the Cuts & Creps moving into what were previously empty shops and seeming to do a roaring trade.

As an architect and in terms of urban regeneration – I wholly applaud this scheme. Increased footfall with active frontages to the Hepburn Road side and rear of the site will I believe address the problems that have led to Hepburn Road's problems.

I commend the minimal intervention to the Stokes Croft frontage, which retains its varied, additive character and remains subservient to The Carriageworks building.

The new buildings to the rear won't be visible from Stokes Croft owing to their modest scale and for being tucked into the site, which falls away from Stokes Croft.

I consider that the development represents a sensitive and conservative approach to a tight and challenging site and not solely commercially driven.

Good urban design such as this can change a place: with workshops, rooms and resident terraces and balconies overlooking Hepburn Road, there is no question it will improve the local area and address the deep rooted problems associated with Hepburn Road.

As local businesses and residents, our voices need to be heard. We request this application is approved.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Steve Mardall
Ascent Architecture

Statement re agenda item 9a: 21/02794/F 86 to 92 and 96 to 102 Stokes Croft, Croftdale, Hepburn Road.

Dear Committee,

I would like to share my views with you on this application as the former ward councillor who was involved in some of the early designs for this site.

This development is badly needed and I believe that planning officers have set an unrealistically high bar for it to receive an approval recommendation. Plans for the site have been in the works for several years, with the applicants working hard to incorporate feedback from the planning authority and local community, and progress now needs to be made instead of endless delays.

This is an eyesore of a site beset by anti-social behaviour. However, there is huge potential here which the development will help to maximise. I understand that more student accommodation will not be welcomed by everybody, but the development will also: update the Stokes Croft shop frontages; provide C3 accommodation and workshop units; dramatically improve the appearance of this end of Hepburn Road; and in my view will alleviate the anti-social behaviour by providing light, overlooking and activity.

Regarding heritage assets, Croft Dale is a little-known building of low architectural merit. It is oddly placed and retaining it would make any development prospect for the site unviable.

This is a good scheme that will make a big, positive difference to Stokes Croft and Hepburn Road. I hope you will look upon this significant opportunity for the area positively.

Mike Davies

Former councillor for Ashley ward and Development Control Committee member, 2016 - 2021

Caci & Co

Stokes Croft redevelopment 21/02794/F

Statement in support: applicant

Dear Committee Members

I really appreciate all the support we've had for our proposals. That includes our ward councillors Tim and Jude, who have kindly given us their time; our former ward councillor Mike Davies; some of our neighbouring residents and businesses; and even the Bristol Civic Society.

More than 30 years ago I started out with a comb and a pair of scissors as a trainee hairdresser in St Andrew's. Since buying our first property, we have reinvested continually and are now lucky enough to have a number of rented properties which we personally manage as a family business.

When we first bought this site – even before we had an architect or any set ideas - we met Mike Davies and the community police officer to talk about what they wanted to see. That was FOUR years ago!

We took all their requests and advice on board, which I think was absolutely the right thing to do. We have tried to include everything that's been asked of us.

If there's one thing, though, I'd ask you not to lose sight of - something all our supporters want to see – is how our development would help put an end to levels of crime in Hepburn Road that led to it being dubbed 'Crack Alley' in a BBC documentary.

Police data reports that in just one 12 month period (2020/21) there were 1,095 crimes committed here. That is crazy – and the people who live here should not have to suffer that on their doorsteps.

We've designed a scheme that will make Hepburn Road safer, more attractive, and much more difficult for the drug dealers to operate, because there will be people living and working here, looking over Hepburn Road, taking pride in this corner of our city.

We've tried to incorporate as many benefits as possible for the local community. While we can't afford to do everything, we have included two workshops on Hepburn Road, perfect for local creative businesses, and something the local community specifically asked for. We've also included family-sized, three and four bedroom homes for rent, all with private terraces or balconies.

We submitted our pre-app three years ago, and our application nearly two years ago. We're a small local business – and these delays and uncertainty make it really difficult for us. We really need to get started on this scheme, so please help us do that by approving our application. Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Tony Caci

86-92 and 96-102 Stokes Croft and Croft Dale

STATEMENT of ARTURUS ARCHITECTS LLP

I am Robert Guy of Arturus Architects which has designed the scheme being considered.

The site on Hepburn Road represents a challenge given it is a very tight urban site in the heart of Stokes Croft.

Our four key goals in designing this scheme were:

1. To develop a mixed-use scheme with workshops, open market homes for rent and student accommodation to go along with the retail and student accommodation which is currently on the site;
2. To develop the site so that it forms a safe, attractive and worthwhile place to live and work by creating landscaped, car free spaces between buildings. All residential and student accommodation is accessible through the scheme from a gated and secure entrance on Stokes Croft;
3. To transform Hepburn Road and make it safer from crime by placing homes and workspaces facing directly over it, in line with the recommendations of the police and 'Secured by Design';
4. To protect the important Stokes Croft frontage by keeping the new buildings at a maximum of four storeys and not visible from the main road. The only change to the Stokes Croft elevation is a single storey addition to the three properties that are adjacent to the Carriageworks building, which remain well below the original height of the Carriageworks. The Carriageworks building was gutted and had an additional floor added in its recent redevelopment.

We have proposed the demolition of Croft Dale to achieve the best solution for the site bearing in mind that Croft Dale is architecturally of low value and any setting it had has already been destroyed by the development immediately to its rear. Keeping it would not allow us to include substantial landscaping with 11 trees. Bristol Civic Society support its demolition and English Heritage has no objection.

The scheme complies with the policies of BCC to encourage cycle use with internal secure space to store bikes. We have also included the ability to connect to a district heating scheme when it is available.

The materials proposed are robust brickwork with a traditional Pennant stone base where appropriate. We have used either stone or a different coloured brickwork to change the elevations where there are entrances. All windows in the new build are aluminium framed. It is proposed that the block facing Hepburn Road can be used for a controlled mural rather than the tagging which is prevalent in the area.

This is a well-considered and modest scheme which makes best use of the site and both fits in and enhances the area of Stokes Croft.

Robert Guy BA Dip Arch RIBA

6th March 2023

Introduction and Context

The Applicant has made every attempt to proactively engage with the Council in the lead up to and since the formal submission of a pre-application advice request on the 2nd of April 2020.

We are nearly three years on from this and five years since the Applicant first started exploring proposals at this site. The proposals have evolved from a solely student accommodation development into a mixed-use scheme. This has been in response to feedback from the community, ward councillors and officers. There have also been numerous design iterations including four significant changes to the design in response to Officers’ comments since the submission of the planning application in May 2021

In October 2022, Pegasus received advice from senior Officers in the Council outlining three concerns which the Applicant needed to address. These were (i) the demolition of Croft Dale, (ii) the previously proposed Mansard Roofs on Nos.98–102 Stokes Croft, and (iii) Highway Officer concerns of safety. The Applicant addressed the latter two comments by introducing flat roofs behind a parapet (as advised to do so) and by instructing a Road Safety Audit and refiguring the pedestrian access arrangements for the ground floor workshops. We did not and do not agree with Officer’s comments on the demolition of Croft Dale.

Officers informed the Applicant they were recommending refusal on grounds outlined in their committee report, on 13th February 2023 just two weeks prior the Committee Agenda Meeting allowing the Applicant no time to formally respond. This is especially frustrating given the Applicant had to wait eleven months following validation of the application for any meaningful engagement/correspondence from a case officer.

Bristol City Council’s Officers have outlined three reasons for refusal. These are discussed in turn below.

1.0 Impact on Stokes Croft Conservation Area

We strongly disagree with the Officers’ assessment and the proposal’s impact on the designated heritage asset which, for the avoidance of doubt, is Stokes Croft Conservation Area as a whole – not just Croft Dale. Croft Dale is locally listed but is screened by walls and other development and we do not consider its demolition will substantially harm the Conservation Area as a whole. In addition, the redevelopment of the brownfield site results in some positive impacts on the Conservation Area.



Historic England and the Civic Society do not object to the proposals to demolish Croft Dale.

The proposals introduce an additional floor at Nos. 98–102 Stokes Croft. The proposals replicate the existing elevation with a parapet and flat roof. These proposals do not go over or even meet the height of the adjacent Carriageworks development. Note, the Carriageworks development also included the introduction of an additional floor.

2.0 Proposed Design

The broad design principles, which have been accepted by Officers, have evolved over the past five years and are heavily influenced by consultees including the police. The minor details officers take issue with are subjective and do not warrant the refusal of planning permission. It was officers who advises us to revert from the mansard to parapet design.

The application demonstrates beyond doubt that the proposed design will positively change the character and nature of Hepburn Road (coined “Crack Alley” in a national documentary), which is strongly associated within drug misuse and antisocial behaviour. The development introduces active frontages, natural surveillance of Hepburn Road and an increase in street activity. The proposals are strongly influenced by the principle to design out crime and regenerate dilapidated former commercial buildings (previously occupied by a windscreen company).

Officers’ assessments of the proposals have failed to recognise that a design should not automatically be considered “bad design” simply because it does not meet their optimum design aspiration of. A good design is one that utilises a site effectively to achieve significant public benefits whilst creatively a scheme that works practically. The benefits of design to improving this corner of Stokes Croft has been largely ignored by officers.

3.0 BREEAM Excellent

The Applicant has revisited the BREEAM assessment and has submitted to Officer’s a revised BREEAM pre-assessment which demonstrates the proposed developed does meet BREEAM Excellent in accordance with planning policy. The updated BREEAM pre-assessment was formally submitted to Officers two weeks prior to this planning committee. No physical changes to the proposals were required in order to confirm the ‘excellent’ standard, so it is frustrating that officers have refused to consider this.

Planning Balance

Members will be aware that Bristol cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, and that there is a housing supply and cost crisis. We therefore consider that Officers have wrongly and seriously downplayed the benefits as “relatively general” leading to their negative conclusion on the proposals. We ask members to take a different view to officers, and have regard of the full positive impacts the development will bring to the site, its immediate surroundings, and the wider area which include.

- Delivery of purpose-built student accommodation, which in turn frees up local housing stock.
- Provision of rental flats contributing to the undersupply of housing stock, including family-size homes in response to officer feedback.
- Provision of 2no. workshop spaces targeted for local businesses creating employment opportunities.
- Regeneration of a run-down area, long associated with crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Introduction of active frontages and over-looking at upper levels along Hepburn Road.
- Effective use of a highly sustainable location with over provision of bicycle parking.
- Development ready to connect to the future District Heat Network.
- 93% Biodiversity Net Gain



Stokes Croft application statement in support

Dear Councillors

I fully support this application.

Our shop sits on Stokes Croft at the front of this site. We've been in Bristol for more than 10 years now, and in this location for about three years, having moved here shortly after Tony and his family bought the site.

I wanted to quickly say three things, so thank you for reading my statement.

Firstly, while Stokes Croft is an amazing place, we can't ignore the fact that local independent businesses are struggling. Tony has been very supportive and is a great landlord, but we do need to make sure that investment – that brings new people and spending into the area – is encouraged. Having more than 80 people living behind us would be great news for our business, and the many others that help make it such a vibrant place.

Secondly, the crime levels along Hepburn Road help nobody. That's not just the residents who live on Hepburn Road, but us as local traders. I want to feel safe, and I want my staff to feel safe, particularly when they leave at the end of a dark winter's day.

Thirdly, students. I'm not surprised people welcome Tony including workshops on Hepburn Road, nor the nine market homes for rent, particularly as they're not all one bed studios but include larger four bedroom homes. But I think this is a totally logical and acceptable place for students to live. Students make a massive difference to our business – and young people are always the ones who add the colour and fun to a place. So, I'm totally fine with student homes as part of this mixed development.

So, as a local business I fully support this application: for me it can't happen soon enough.

Thank you,

Drue Mock
Owner
Cuts & Creps
90 Stokes Croft

**APPLICATION TO REDEVELOP STOKES CROFT/HEPBURN ROAD SITE (21/02794/F)
LETTER IN SUPPORT**

Dear Councillors

As owners of several residential and commercial neighbouring properties, including The Love Inn, we fully support this application.

My family has been at the heart of Bristol's cultural life for decades, particularly in and around Stokes Croft. In 1984 we opened the Tropic Club, The Bank (now Love Inn) in 1986, Lakota in 1992 and 130 (now The Social) in 2001. We've been supporting and fighting to protect our city's night-time economy for decades.

However, places do change; investment is needed; and development should be welcomed, where it brings positive things to that community.

This proposal absolutely brings real benefits to this neighbourhood. More homes are needed; brownfield sites should be used first; planting trees and making a greener place is good for everyone's wellbeing; including workshops that are really needed to nurture local start-ups is excellent.

If you've been to the site you'll have seen it is currently an eyesore. If you looked down at your feet, you'll have seen discarded syringes and drug-taking paraphernalia littering the floor. This is no way for local people to live. Nor do I want this next to our properties where our residential tenants become disillusioned with the area after moving in and the Love Inn operates. It's not fair on residents or on people enjoying a night out.

One of the concerns officers have, is the student rooms looking over Hepburn Road. Some of those first floor rooms will have a little less light than is ideal. In my opinion, this is missing the point: having rooms and workspaces looking directly onto Hepburn Road is one of the absolute musts for this development. This additional surveillance will deter the unacceptable antisocial behaviour that is currently taking place in the vicinity. I'm sure plenty of students would accept a little less light to live in a brand new home, bang in the heart of one of Bristol's coolest places.

I've seen the reasons why officers want you to turn this down, but I think that's wrong. I think the benefits this development will bring unquestionably outweigh any shortcomings.

So, I'd urge you to support the application. Thank you for considering my opinion.

Kind regards

Bentleigh Burgess

A – 21/02794/F Stokes Croft

I am here to support the planning application for Hepburn Road. Firstly, of course I would like to see a development that is all about social rent family housing and when I initially heard about this I had reservations about yet more student accommodation. But having been to the site I am aware of the difficulty it presents.

I am also aware that plans have changed to include general rental housing as well as workshops which the developer has the intention of working with local partners to deliver a local based resource.(ive been in the meeting where this was discussed)

I am aware that there are legitimate concerns about the locally listed building on the site and plans to demolish. Again it would be great to keep all buildings but I am not convinced that any development could happen with that on site. (Ive checked with other people I know in the development business who have confirmed to me that the developers aren't just pulling the wool over my eyes). I also think that to judge whether this house – Croft Dale – should stay or go needs to take into account the fact that a four storey building has been given permission and already built right behind it...so any perceived heritage harm has already been done, surely?

I moved to this area just over twenty years ago. This site has always been in need of development and we all know about the drug related issues as illustrated in BBC's Drugland. In fact I have since seen details from the police that show that in 2020/2021 there were more than 1,000 crimes reported in this location. Any development will surely improve this?

My fear that if this is rejected it will be another 20 years before we see a development

I don't agree the development is disproportionate to the area. At a height of 4 stories – and actually mainly three storeys - it will be dwarfed should the application for 9 stories of student accommodation above mickleburghs be granted. At this height it also cannot be seen over Stokes Croft frontage. I am also aware that the architects applicant has submitted amendments to planning officers' queries which have yet to be addressed in the current report.

I encourage you to approve the application, agreeing to any necessary conditions to ensure these final changes are implemented.

Tim Wye

Councillor for Ashley Ward