

WARD: Clifton

SITE ADDRESS: Bristol Zoo Gardens Guthrie Road Bristol BS8 3HA

APPLICATION NO: 22/02889/LA Listed Building Consent (Alter/Extend)

DETERMINATION DEADLINE: 3 February 2023

Works to listed buildings to facilitate the redevelopment of the site to include 196 residential units (Class C3), community floorspace (Class E, F1 and F2), and open space with associated landscaping, play space, parking, accesses (pedestrian, cycle and vehicular), and infrastructure. Works to listed building including: access-works to the Guthrie Road entrance gates; the conversion of the Entrance Lodge to facilitate community floorspace, the residential conversion of the Giraffe House, and various restoration and refurbishment works to the Aquarium (former Bear Pit), Monkey Temple, and Birds of Prey Aviary to secure their future as part of accessible landscaped gardens.

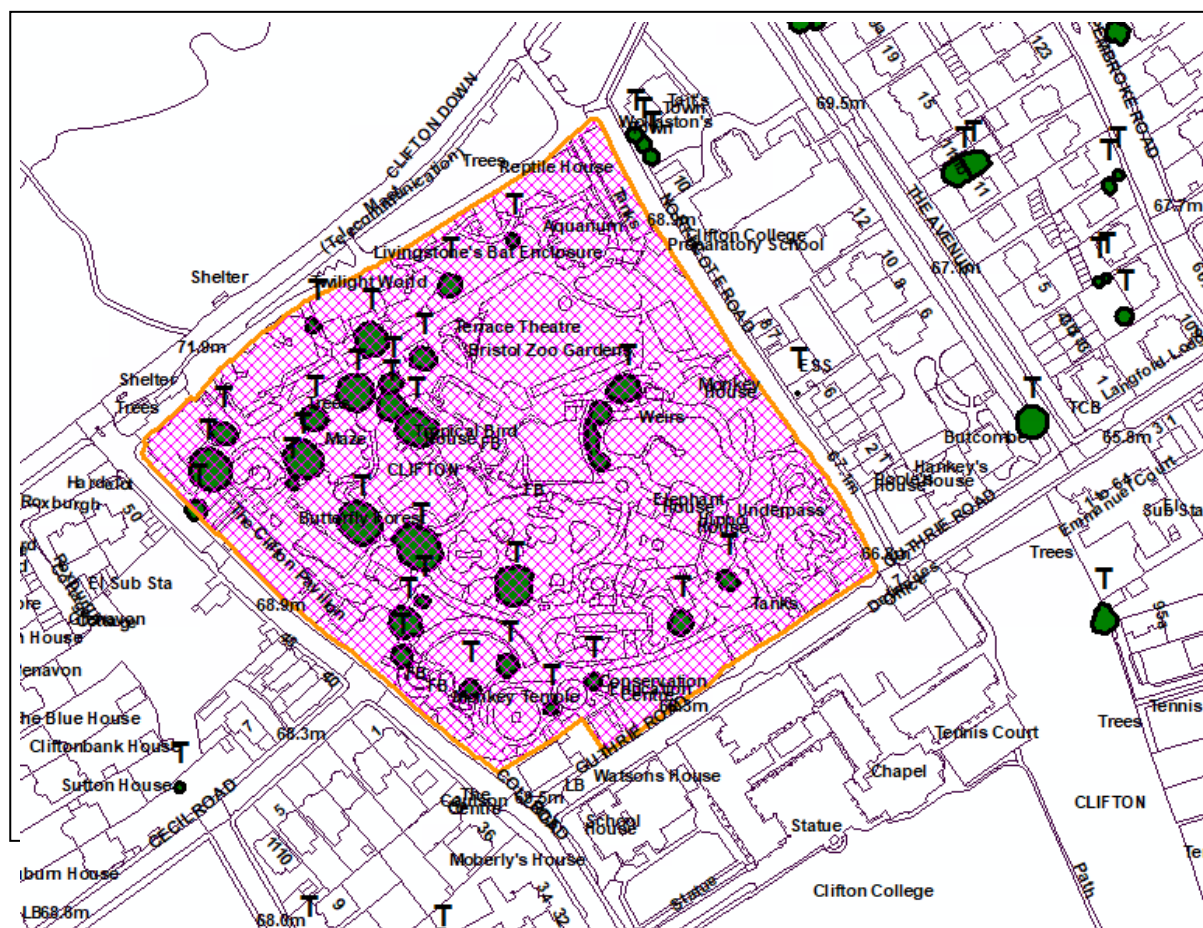
RECOMMENDATION: Grant subject to Condition(s)

AGENT: Savills (UK) Limited
Embassy House
Queens Avenue
Bristol
BS8 1SB

APPLICANT: Bristol, Clifton & West Of England Zoological
Society Ltd
Bristol Zoo Gardens
Guthrie Road
Bristol
BS8 3HA

The following plan is for illustrative purposes only, and cannot be guaranteed to be up to date.

LOCATION PLAN:



18/04/23 14:23

Committee report

Development Control Committee A – 26 April 2023**Application No. 22/02889/LA: Bristol Zoo Gardens Guthrie Road Bristol BS8 3HA****REASON FOR REFERRAL**

The application is referred to Committee due to the significance of the proposed development and the response the application has received from members of the public.

SUMMARY

Bristol, Clifton and West of England Zoological Society (“the Society” or “the Applicant”) has closed Bristol Zoo Gardens (“the site”), meaning a proposal to re-use or redevelop the site is needed. Accordingly, there is a need to secure a future use, or mix of uses, for the site that can provide the long-term management of the open spaces (including the historic buildings within the landscape). The Applicant has applied for full planning permission to redevelop the site. Full planning permission is sought to redevelop the site to provide 196 residential dwellings (including 20% affordable) alongside approximately 500 sq. m Class E (commercial, business and service), F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and F2 (local community uses) floorspace, a children’s playground, provision of free public access, between 8am-7pm in the summer (June – September) and 8am-5pm for the remainder of the year, restoration of listed buildings, provision of new accesses (pedestrian, cycle and vehicular), associated parking, enhancement of lake, and biodiverse green roofs and photovoltaic solar panels incorporated throughout (ref. 22/02737/F).

This report concerns the Applicant’s application for listed building consent, which is required to facilitate elements of the development referenced above, where works are proposed to demolish, alter or extend listed buildings. Specifically, listed building consent is needed and sought for works to the following Grade II listed buildings:

- Entrance Lodge (Guthrie Road Gates) – the proposal seeks to convert the building to form a community focussed building, comprised of a mix of uses, including a café, exhibition area, education and meeting room, and WCs (Classes E, F1 and F2).
- Giraffe House – proposed to be converted into a single-family home.
- Bear Pit (Aquarium) – the proposal is to refurbish the aquarium to better reveal the original form of the building as a bear pit. The building will be integrated into the landscape as a feature accessible to the public.
- Monkey Temple - the proposal seeks to reopen access up the steps to the Monkey Temple and reinstate the historic Buddha statue. The proposal integrates the Monkey Temple into the proposal’s open space offering.
- Eagle Aviary (Birds of Prey Aviary) – the proposal seeks to convert the animal enclosure to a seating area integrated into the proposal’s open space offering.
- Guthrie Road Entrance Gates (South entrance gates and flanking walls) – the proposal seeks to be mechanise and refurbish the gates.

The proposals included within application ref. 22/02737/F will impact the setting of listed buildings and other heritage assets, including the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area. These impacts are considered under application ref. 22/02737/F, rather than this application for listed building consent, which only concerns the works proposed to alter the listed buildings referenced above.

Overall, the works proposed to the listed buildings are appropriate, paying special regard to the features of special architectural or historic interest which the respective listed buildings possess. Some minor harm is posed by the development, but in each case the harm is justified and outweighed by heritage gains to the respective building. It is recommended that listed building consent is granted subject to condition in accordance with Key Issue D ‘Conclusion and Recommendation’.

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The site has operated as a Zoological Garden since 1836. In addition to the Zoo Gardens use, ancillary uses at the site include a café/restaurant, event space, an education centre and a gift shop. The Zoo closed in 2022. The site is relatively flat and developed with a number of single and two storey buildings and significant landscaping. In addition, there are many animal enclosures of different sizes and forms, between which are garden areas, pedestrian walkways and a central lake. Elements of this layout remain from the early form of the site, including the Grand Terrace and the lake, although the form of the lake has evolved over the lifetime of the zoo. The site is enclosed by a perimeter wall and buildings that extends around most of the site. Paid public access is controlled through the ticket office at the north west corner of the site, with other points of access limited to servicing.

The site is bound by a car park and the A4176 (Clifton Down) to the north, beyond which is Clifton Down itself (both the car park to the north and the Downs beyond represent Common Land); Guthrie Road is to the south, beyond which is Clifton College; Northcote Road to the east, beyond which are Clifton College Preparatory School, boarding houses and residential dwellings; and College Road to the west, beyond which are residential properties and a former car park which has received planning permission for the erection of 62 dwellings (ref. 21/01999/F).

The Local Plan designated the site as Local Historic Parks and Gardens and the site is within the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area. This application concerns all six of the Grade II listed buildings within the site: Bristol Zoological Gardens entrance, Giraffe House, South entrance gates and flanking walls (Guthrie Road), Bear Pit, Monkey Temple, and Eagle Aviary. There are also locally listed buildings on the site, and the development would impact the setting of other non-designated heritage assets in the locality, as well as designated heritage assets, including Clifton College's collection of listed buildings to the south of Guthrie Road and the Downs Conservation Area to the north.

APPLICATION

The works proposed to the listed buildings are explained within the 'SUMMARY' section, and are also discussed in detail within Key Issue C.

There is also an accompanying full planning application seeking planning permission for 196 residential dwellings (including 20% affordable) alongside approximately 500 sq. m Class E (commercial, business and service), F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and F2 (local community uses) floorspace, a children's playground, provision of free public access, between 8am-7pm in the summer (June – September) and 8am-5pm for the remainder of the year, restoration of listed buildings, provision of new accesses (pedestrian, cycle and vehicular), associated parking, enhancement of lake, and biodiverse green roofs and photovoltaic solar panels incorporated throughout. Ref. 22/02737/F.

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY – NEIGHBOURS

The application was advertised by site and press notice, and neighbours were notified of the application by letter. In response to the submission of amended plans and further information (largely concerning the application for full planning permission), additional notification occurred in November 2022 for 21 days.

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In total, 24 objections and 1 support comment have been received (as of 17.04.23). These comments are summarised below, comments made by key local stakeholders such as interest groups or residents' associations are summarised under their respective groups names. Please see the Appendix 1 and 2 to this report which includes a record of the representations received in respect of this planning application. Due to the limits of the Council's IT System and the number of representations received, the record of consultation responses included in the appendices is not exhaustive. However, officers have reviewed all the representations and are satisfied that all material matters raised have been adequately summarised in the report itself.

Objection Comments:

i. Impact on Heritage Assets

- The proposal will harm the listed buildings on Guthrie Rd at Clifton College.
- The proposal will fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The cumulative effect of high density housing development on West Car Park and Bristol Zoo will result in a canyon effect.
- The impact on the historic garden is unacceptable.
- The six storey northern block is too tall.
- The buildings have a generic appearance.
- The proposals are not consistent with the Victorian buildings in the area.
- The proposal will result in the loss of historic boundary features.
- Support for criticisms levied by the Victorian Society, and Historic Buildings and Places.
- The application proposals breach the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the "LB and Conservation Areas Act") in failing to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area (Article 72(1)).
- The Clifton Conservation Area Appraisal lists Bristol Zoo among six "crucial landmarks nationally and on Bristol's landscape" (para 6.3.2). "The variety and quality of views in Clifton are a critical component of the area's special interest," (para 6.2.3) The proposals conflict with Long View L25, Local View LC21 and a Landmark of City Wide Importance (see Map 4). The cumulative effect of high density housing development on West Car Park and Bristol Zoo will result in a canyon effect. This will result in substantial harm to neighbouring listed buildings, heritage and the Clifton Conservation Area, in conflict with the Appraisal and the LB and Conservations Area Act.
- The application is contrary to policy BCS22.
- The proposal will result in substantial harm to the Conservation Area and important listed buildings on Guthrie Rod at Clifton College.
- Disagreement with Historic England's assessment and comments.
- The architecture is not suitably informed by the local character.
- The external spaces proposed are not effective, balconies are not suitable.
- The roofscape should respond to the listed buildings and the historic streets of Clifton.
- The architecture should be green.
- Support for the analysis of the Downs for People, the objections of the Victorian Society, Bristol CAP, and Avon Gardens Trust.

ii. Other Matters

- There is no reasonable justification for building on the gardens, which should be preserved for future generations.
- There is insufficient justification for closing the Zoo.
- The Zoo should be a public asset.
- The loss of public amenity and green space should be resisted.

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- The loss of community facilities is not justified.
- The affordable housing is not integrated into the development.
- Another tourist attraction should take the site on.
- Acknowledgement of housing need.
- The proposals will detrimentally impact neighbours' privacy, including pupils at Clifton College.
- Traffic from the development will detrimentally impact Clifton College and its pupils.
- Concerns that building height will overshadow gardens.
- The houses will not be affordable.
- This space, without animals, should be for all the people of Bristol to enjoy. The proposed plans do not reflect this ethos.
- The proposal will result in the felling of a significance number of trees.
- The development will only benefit those who live within in it.

Support Comments:

i. Heritage Assets

- The designs are sensitive, only building where existing buildings exist.

ii. Other Matters

- The development will provide much-needed housing.
- The development will provide access to the gardens for the people of Bristol for free.

Downs For People

Downs for People (DfP) co-ordinated objections to the zoo using the Downs off Ladies Mile as its main car park. It challenged the licensing of this use in the High Court in 2020: this led to a court order in 2021 establishing that no part of the Downs can be used for parking for non-Downs activities from the end of 2023. DfP members have unrivalled expertise in the history of zoo parking and examined the zoo's finances in relation to successive planning applications. We are sad the zoo is closing: our objective now is to ensure that the zoo's departure benefits those using the Downs for recreation as much as possible.

Summary

Downs for People (DfP) has four comments on these proposals:

I. Strong statutory measures, not just planning conditions, will be needed to secure public access to the zoo grounds. If the zoo must close, Downs for People supports this application insofar as it may create public open space to complement what is available on the Downs. Recreational use in perpetuity cannot be secured by a planning condition or section 106 agreement. Something stronger, like dedication under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and/or designation as a town or village green under the Commons Act 2006, is required. In addition, the zoo should establish an endowment fund for future maintenance.

II. Parking history has been mis-represented as a reason for closure. In particular:

1) Visitor numbers have never been constrained by lack of parking: in its annual accounts the zoo has identified this only as a possible future risk.

2) DfP's successful High Court challenge did not result in the zoo being left with no parking. It still had its surface West car park. The zoo has decided to build housing on this. (A modest multi-storey car park there could have made up for the spaces lost elsewhere.) There is anyway still significant on-road parking in the streets around the zoo and on the Downs.

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3) In 2019, before COVID struck, the zoo published a strategy to develop the Wild Place as its main site and to keep the Clifton site as a local attraction. Parking for the Clifton site was not seen as a problem.

III. The zoo has exaggerated the fall in pre-COVID visitor numbers and its financial difficulties. The zoo's finances appear healthy in its annual accounts, with profits in the three years before COVID. It described itself as 'flourishing' when it last applied for planning permission in 2016/17. Visitor numbers may be lower than in the 1960s but have not fallen dramatically in recent years. The zoo's insurers have covered most of its COVID losses. There seems no compelling financial reason to close the Clifton site other than to make money to develop Wild Place.

IV. The constraints on the use of the Downs north of the zoo – and the potential of the land - need clarification. All the land between the zoo's north boundary and the main road, including the land outside the zoo's main entrance, is part of Clifton Down. Under the 1861 Downs Act, this land must be used for the public resort and recreation of Bristolians. It is also common land, to which there is a right of access on foot. The pedestrian route along the zoo boundary wall probably qualifies as a public right of way through long use.

The recreational value of this land should be maximised. The creation of a grand entrance to the proposed conservation hub and the retention of a large car park (that could only be used by visitors to the Downs) would not achieve this. The construction of large buildings on the boundary of the land would reduce the recreational value of this part of the Downs.

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY – INTERNAL AND OTHER STATUTORY CONTRIBUTORS

This section summarises consultation responses received from statutory contributors and interest groups. Appendix 1 and 2 to this report includes a record of the representations received in respect of this planning application. Due to the limits of the Council's IT System and the number of representations received, the record of consultation responses included in the appendices is not exhaustive. However, officers have reviewed all the representations and are satisfied that all material matters raised have been adequately summarised in the report itself.

i. **Urban Design Team (BCC) – no objection:**

Summary:

- Bristol Zoo is one of the earliest provincial zoos in the world and is consequently a highly significant heritage site.
- The relocation of the zoo to enable greater focus on its valuable conservation work is recognised.
- The proposals include heritage gains including improvements to the site boundaries and adaptive reuse of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- However, the proposed new residential units within the site and the scale and massing of apartment blocks around the perimeter of the site lead to less than substantial harm (NPPF, paragraph 202) to the significance of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings within and around the site.
- Clear and convincing justification for any harm to the significance of heritage assets is required in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF. The applicant has stated that the level of harm caused by the scale, massing and general quantum of the proposed development is required to ensure the delivery of the heritage gains and public benefits of the scheme.

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- Revised plans and documents were submitted in late October/early November 2022, the Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement explains the key changes made. These comments respond to those submissions. A Vu.City model has also been provided, any views that have been relied upon when making these comments are included within the document.

Heritage assessment:

The site and its contents are subject to a number of local and national designations with regard to historical and cultural significance, including:

- Local Historic Park and Garden – the site
- Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area (within)
- The Downs Conservation Area (immediately to the north)
- Listed buildings:
 - Bristol Zoological Gardens entrance (Grade II), north west corner of site
 - Giraffe House (Grade II), south eastern side
 - South entrance gates and flanking walls, Gurthrie Road
 - Clifton College, various Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings (to the south)
 - Bear Pit (Grade II), within the site
 - Monkey Temple (Grade II), within the site
 - Eagle Aviary (Grade II), within the site
- Locally listed building:
 - The Clifton Pavilion (west side of site, facing College Road)
 - Clifton Music School (southern tip at junction of College Road and Guthrie Road)
 - Clifton College Preparatory School (north east)
 - Houses on Clifton Down (to the west)

Significance (NPPF, paragraph 194/5)

Bristol Zoological Gardens opened in 1836 and is predated only by Paris, London and Dublin zoos. Features from the original design of the zoo survive including the entrance lodges (listed grade II), the former bear pit (listed grade II) and terrace promenade.

Later features of the zoo landscape are also surviving nationally important heritage assets such as the former giraffe house (listed grade II), monkey temple (listed grade II), Guthrie Road entrance gates (listed grade II) and eagle aviary (listed grade II).

The zoo and its landscape make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area, it is a locally designated historic park and garden and contains the locally listed Clifton Pavilion. The zoological gardens have been an important cultural asset for the city for nearly 200 years with multiple generations enjoying visits to both the animals and high-quality planted landscape. Consequently, the site has immense communal value in addition to the demonstrable architectural, aesthetic and historic values.

This significance is recognised by the applicant in their heritage assessment and has informed aspects of the proposals such as the reuse of the entrance lodges, bear pit, monkey temple, eagle aviary, Clifton Pavilion.

Assessment of impact (NPPF, paragraphs 199-204):

The relocation of the zoo poses many challenges particularly where there are so many important aspects to the site as summarised above. The proposal offers opportunities particularly where the

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practical necessities of running a zoological garden in a residential neighbourhood have led to parts of the site making a neutral or negative contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The boundaries to the site, particular along Northcote Road on the east side of the site and in the middle section of the College Road boundary are proposed to be improved through this development offering an enhancement to these aspects of the conservation area.

The retention and reuse of numerous assets within the site; entrance lodges, bearpit, monkey temple, eagle aviary, giraffe house, Clifton Pavilion and the approach to the listed Guthrie Road entrance are welcomed as heritage gains. Similarly, the free public access proposed to the gardens between the hours of 8am and 5pm represents a heritage benefit, given it will increase public interaction with a number of heritage assets within the site.

Despite these gains the proposals will cause a degree of less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of heritage assets within and around the site.

This harm will be caused by the scale and massing of the perimeter residential blocks and the introduction of residential dwellings within the historic landscape.

This part of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area is predominantly characterised by large Victorian residential villas that front Clifton and Durdham Downs and surrounding streets as recognised by Panoramic View 21 in the Character Appraisal. The type of large residential apartment blocks proposed for the zoo (as demonstrated in view 1 of the appendices) will consequently differ from this character and not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area as required by the Act (Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990).

The block on the northern boundary also harms the setting of the listed entrance lodges as demonstrated in view 2 of the appendices where the current significance of the entrance lodges includes their visual dominance in the landscape despite their low architectural form.

The applicant has introduced some design changes to the scheme in light of previous comments. These have helped reduce the impact, however, introducing greater void (windows) to solid (wall) ratios and/or greater (deeper) recesses in the areas of the circulation cores particularly with the block on the northern boundary would help to break down the massing and create a more villa type appearance thereby reducing the level of harm.

The scale and massing of the other blocks around the site also causes less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of listed buildings such as the listed Clifton College buildings on Guthrie Road as demonstrated in views at the junction of Northcote Road looking towards College Road (Local Views 26, Character Appraisal and view 3 of the appendices).

The impact on the setting of the Clifton College heritage assets is reduced in views from the south, such as from the cricket pitch, where only a slight if any impact is visible in views such as view 4 of the appendices (Long View 25, Character Appraisal).

The proposed 'lake house' villas within the zoo landscape are architecturally interesting buildings that complement the design aesthetic of the retained zoo buildings. However, by introducing

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private residential dwellings to what is currently a quality landscape that is perceived as public will cause cumulative harm to the conservation area and local historic park and garden. This harm will be caused by the introduction of vehicular movement and car parking to what is currently a largely vehicle free landscape. These private dwellings and their associated aspects will change the perception from being a public to a private landscape impacting the communal value of the site as well as the landscape qualities. This will be particularly evident when looking into the site from College Road (view 5 of the appendices, also identified as Local View 21 in the Character Appraisal) where the landscape will appear to be a private residential street as opposed to a public historic landscape.

The proposed northern block will not materially harm the significance of the Downs Conservation Area due to the topography of Downs and the screening provided by the existing trees.

Urban Design:

The height, scale and massing of the development has been assessed in relation to heritage assets and the character of the area, the harm associated with this has been discussed contrary to policy DM26 and 27. The layout directs the majority of the development to the site's edges reinforcing the 'walled' character of the site. With regard to policy DM28, the development will create a safe, attractive, high quality, inclusive and eligible public realm, both within and outside of the site. As distinct new part of Clifton, the new buildings as proposed will introduce high quality materials to the townscape in accordance with policy DM29.

Conclusion:

Clear and convincing justification for any harm to the significance of heritage assets is required in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF. The applicant has stated that the level of harm caused by the scale, massing and general quantum of the proposed development is required to ensure the delivery of the heritage gains and public benefits of the scheme. These heritage gains include the retention and reuse of the various heritage assets (designated and non-designated) and enhancement to aspects of the conservation area as detailed above.

Public benefits provided by this scheme that can contribute to the planning balance as defined by paragraph 202 of the NPPF include; free public access to the gardens and a cultural strategy that will encourage greater community use of the assets. Planning conditions and agreements will be required to secure these benefits should this proposed development receive consent.

Archaeological conditions to secure the recording of the heritage assets prior to and during the development works will also be required in accordance with paragraph 205 of the NPPF and Supplementary Planning Document 7. This should include the pre-commencement condition to secure an archaeological programme of works and historic building recording and watching brief conditions.

ii. **The Twentieth Century Society (statutory consultee) – no objection**

The Society has no objections to the majority of the work proposed to the 20th-century buildings and enclosures on the site. We do not take issue with the proposed reuse of the Grade II Birds of Prey Aviary as a seating area, and we support plans to restore the Grade II Monkey Temple as a garden folly. We are pleased that the Terrace Theatre (2003) will be retained as a community facility. When we first reviewed the application, we were concerned about the proposed two-storey zinc tile-clad rooftop extension to the 1930s Clock Tower Building which we felt would have a

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detrimental impact on the building. The architects have now revised and improved the design and, as such, we do not wish to comment on this aspect of the scheme.

iii. **The Victorian Society (statutory consultee)** – objection

Final Comments:

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on amendments to the original proposals for the redevelopment of Bristol Zoological Gardens. However, having reviewed the latest documentation our objection remains.

In our previous objection we drew attention to the site's high significance as one of Europe's earliest zoological gardens, and one which continues in this use. Furthermore, we highlighted the important role it plays in contributing to the significance of the Clifton Conservation Area and the setting of nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The proposals which would see the site adapted to a new use, with a quantum of development alien to the character of the site and the Conservation Area, would cause serious harm to significance as outlined in our previous consultation response.

The amendments which comprise of minor design changes do not address these concerns and the proposals remain substantially as first presented. Our serious concerns about the harm the scheme would cause to the significance of the site, Conservation Area and nearby designated and non-designated assets remain.

The NPPF is clear that it is desirable to '*sustain and enhance*' the significance of heritage assets (para 190a), and that '*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*' (para 199). Furthermore, that '*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.*' (para 206). The amended proposals do not ensure this, and the Victorian Society maintains its objection to the proposals.

Initial Comments:

Bristol Zoological Gardens is a site of high architectural and historical significance. The fifth zoo to open in Europe, it is one of only three remaining 1830s zoological gardens in the British Isles. Its rarity as an early example of this type of landscape, its surviving historic zoological buildings, and continued use for its original purpose make it extremely significant. Furthermore, its place within the Clifton Conservation Area and relationship to nearby listed buildings mean that the Gardens are very sensitive and significant alteration is likely to cause a degree of harm not just to the Gardens themselves, but to the Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets.

The Victorian Society understands Bristol Zoological Society's desire to vacate the Gardens and we acknowledge that the principle of some degree of residential development could be acceptable. Irrespective of any future redevelopment, however, the departure of the zoo from the site will seriously harm the historic significance of the Gardens. We are also concerned by aspects of the design of the proposals.

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Bristol Zoological Gardens is characterised by its low density, small scale, historic (listed) buildings, situated within a mature landscape, contained within a perimeter wall. This means that although the Gardens retain a discreet character of their own, distinct from the surrounding Conservation Area, they nonetheless make a positive contribution as an oasis within the surrounding built environment. The zoo does not compete with the neighbouring buildings for prominence, and it succeeds in preserving an openness towards the Downs. Importantly, despite alteration since opening in 1836, the site remains legible as a historic 19th century Zoological Gardens within a wider 19th century locality, something, as noted above, which is exceptionally unusual and significant.

The proposed development would seriously harm the significance and character of the site and the Conservation Area. The density and height of the new buildings would represent a gross overdevelopment and erode the character and legibility of the historic landscape. The height of the buildings around the perimeter of the site mean that the gardens would be cut off completely from the surrounding Conservation Area, effectively turning them into gardens for the benefit of the new development, rather than the wider locality. The height of the buildings would also harm the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings by introducing a scale, form and architectural idiom at odds with the Conservation Area. The new buildings would compete with the listed Clifton College and the nearby 19th century housing, diminishing their prominence. They would also destroy any impression of openness linking the site to the Downs. These effects would be heightened by the lack of significant gaps between the proposed buildings, especially those to the north west and north east. Any acceptable proposal would be of a lower scale and density, better preserving the Garden's character and positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Ultimately, this gives rise to the concern that the proposed development is not informed by a full understanding of the history and character of the site. Surviving zoological gardens of the 1830s are very rare and it is important that proper study of the site is undertaken to identify which parts of the original design survive. Any proposals must be based on these findings and seek to enhance and sustain this significance, ensuring that the gardens remain a heritage asset which can be fully appreciated by the public.

The NPPF is clear that it is desirable to '*sustain and enhance*' the significance of heritage assets (para 190a), and that '*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*' (para 199). Furthermore, that '*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.*' (para 206). This proposal would not enhance or better reveal the significance of the site and nearby heritage assets. The Victorian Society objects to the proposal in its current form.

iv. Historic Buildings and Places (Ancient Monuments Society) (statutory consultee) – objection

While the departure of the Zoo from this site will harm the overall historic and communal value of the Gardens, HB&P acknowledges that an element of residential development is acceptable to secure the future of the site. However, we do have concerns with some aspects of the application.

We welcome the proposals to retain the 'parkland' setting around the central lake as well as the removal of later unsympathetic accretions to the designated and local heritage assets, and their refurbishment as parkland follies and dwellings. We agree that the location of the new apartment

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buildings is best located to the perimeter of the site, as proposed, however, their height and scale is excessive and harmful to the setting of the listed Zoo buildings and to the character of the conservation area. The existing buildings to be demolished are small scale and of different heights with spaces between each building, whereas the proposed buildings present a solid built form extending along each frontage, with little permeability beyond the formal entrances. The design and massing of these new buildings, particularly those on Guthrie Street opposite the listed Clifton College buildings, don't appear to fit well within the streetscapes of the conservation area, and at up to 6 stories, are too tall for the area. While not a listed building, the Art Deco clock building contributes to the story and development of the zoo over time. The roof extension is clumsy and doesn't respect the elongated proportions of the building, harming its appearance. Retaining it in its existing form would be preferable, and would provide a needed gap between the taller new buildings to either side.

While we don't oppose a modern architectural design, the design of the perimeter buildings should be reconsidered to better reflect the modulation, scale and rhythm of the neighbouring development to ensure the new development will contribute to and enhance the historic interest and significance of the conservation area.

Paragraphs 195, 199, and 200 of the NPPF (2021) are relevant.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establish the requirements to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. I would be grateful if we could be informed of the outcome when this becomes available.

v. **Historic England (statutory consultee) – no objection**

Third Comment: The additional information and minor amendments have no material bearing on the advice which we have previously given ("Second Comments"). I therefore refer you to our previous letter of 23 November 2022 (our reference L01508753), the comments of which still stand.

Second Comments:

While the proposals are found to be a sensitive response to their historic context, a considerable aspect of the site's significance is bound up in its continued use as a Zoo since the early 19th century. The closure will have a pronounced harmful impact on the significance of the site. The loss of the Zoo from the site is partially mitigated through good design, retention of much of the historic planting and landscape, and allowances made for future public access. There are some heritage benefits to the proposals, especially the removal of later accretions to the listed structures, and the restoration of those buildings.

In response to the initial proposal, Historic England advised that the upward extension to the Clock Tower building and façade of Block S2 on Guthrie Road could be improved, in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The submitted amendments proposals addresses these concerns, and these buildings suitably address the Conservation Area and context. Amendments to the northern block represent an improvement, and the new openings introduced within the walled perimeter strike an appropriate balance the preservation of the walled perimeter with the desire to invite users to enter the site. Overall, the amendments made are not opposed.

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The proposals will cause harm to the character and appearance of the Hotwells and Clifton Conservation Area. A significant part of that harm is derived from the loss of the Zoo from the site, which it appears cannot be avoided as the site is no longer compatible with modern standards of animal welfare.

The introduction of vehicular traffic into the site will have marked adverse impact on its character and appearance. As we have noted previously, the traffic-free nature of the gardens contributes to their tranquillity and sense of “otherworldliness”. You will need to be satisfied that vehicle movements have been kept to the absolute minimum necessary to service the proposed accommodation.

The site is not allocated in the statutory local plan, and as such your authority will need to carefully consider both the principle of residential development and the quantum of new homes. If you consider both the principle and quantum acceptable, our view is that the harm has been mitigated as far as possible through good design.

This allows you to proceed to the “planning balance” of weighing the less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area against any wider public benefit offered by the proposals, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 202.

There are a number of heritage benefits associated with the proposals which should be considered alongside any wider public benefits. These include the retention and restoration of all the listed structures within the site, and the provision of free public access to the retained garden areas. We continue to encourage your authority to secure this public access through legal agreement, should you be minded to recommend approval of these applications.

As per our previous advice, we also recommend that details of a strategy to interpret and understand the history of the site should be subject to an appropriately worded planning condition, if approved.

Recommendation

No objection to the applications on heritage grounds.

Initial Comments: see Appendix/Supporting Documents for full comments.

vi. Conservation Advisory Panel – objection

Any comments on this application are tied to the position regarding the full planning application (22/02737/F).

However, the substantial harm to the setting of the listed buildings would not be outweighed by substantial public benefit. The context of the listed buildings would be completely eroded and their original purpose would no longer make sense within the proposed development. The proposal does not accord with relevant Local Plan heritage policies nor the requirements of the NPPF and cannot be supported.

Officer Note: Whilst there are objections, for example from the Victorian Society and Historic Buildings and Places, there are no instructions from them requesting the Council to notify or refer the

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application to the Secretary of State. As such, there is no requirement for the Council to notify or refer the application to the Secretary of State in the case Members resolve to grant listed building consent, as per the Heritage Direction 2021 and the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021 – referred to as “**the NPPF**”

Planning Practice Guidance (“the PPG”), Historic Environment Section including the following subsections: Overview, Decision-making, Designated heritage assets, Heritage consent process, Consultation and notification requirements for heritage related applications, and Further information on heritage and planning issues

Bristol Local Plan comprising Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011)

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014)

EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a material planning consideration as the duty is engaged through the public body decision making process. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 provides that a public authority must in the exercise of its functions have due regard to:-

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relationships between persons who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not share it.

During the consideration of this application due regard has been given to the impact of this scheme in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty in terms of its impact upon the groups with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The majority of the development’s impacts are assessed thoroughly within regard to the Public Sector Equality duty within the corresponding report for the application for full planning permission. Nevertheless, in respect of the works that require listed building consent, the works to the Bear Pit should be considered in respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Bear Pit is proposed to be restored to its original built form and incorporated into the landscape as a raised viewing platform. There is only access to the platform via steps, other means of access such as through a lift or a ramp would harm this Grade II listed building’s significance, and hence there is justification for this element of the development not being accessible for those who cannot use steps. Specifically, the countervailing factor concerns the need to allocate great weight to the designated heritage asset’s conservation.

The LPA has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in the Equality Act 2010 when making the assessment set out in this report. The approval of this application would not have any adverse impact upon any protected group, save for the development not including step-free access to the raised viewing platform within the Bear Pit, albeit the great weight given to the conservation of the Grade II listed building outweighs the failure of the development to allow access to

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the viewing platform for all. Therefore, the requirements of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 have been fully considered.

KEY ISSUES**(A) LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

Works in respect of listed buildings are restricted by s.7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Act"). S.8 of the Act authorises works to listed buildings, where written consent for their execution has been granted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The LPA may refuse or grant consent subject to conditions, in considering whether to grant listed building consent, s.16 of the Act requires the LPA shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. As such, applications for listed building consent are not determined in accordance with the Development Plan in the same way in which a planning application is required to. However, planning objectives included within such Development Plan Policies relevant to heritage asserts and design are likely to be material to the consideration of applications for listed building consents, as is the NPPF. Hence the remaining assessment has had due regard to the Development Plan and the NPPF. The key assessment to make is with regard to the proposal's impact on the special architectural or historical interest of the affected listed buildings.

Further to this, s.66 requires LPAs to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest which it possesses. Similarly, as required by s.72 of the Act, when exercising planning functions, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area Conservation Area, in this case the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area. These assessments are more relevant to the accompanying application for full planning permission (ref. 22/02737/F), and hence has been considered as part of that application. Similarly, matters raised by members of the public and other contributors that do not relate to the proposal's impact on the special architectural or historical interest of the six listed buildings this application concerns, are not relevant to this application's assessment, but are assessed as part of the full planning application (ref. 22/02737/F).

Conservation Areas and listed buildings are considered to be 'Heritage Assets' by both the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policy BCS22 'Conservation and the Historic Environment' aims to safeguard or enhance heritage assets, as does policy DM31 'Heritage Assets' which requires new development to preserve, and where appropriate enhance the elements which contribute to the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

Section 16 of national guidance within the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset; great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, with any harm or loss requiring clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Further, paragraph 201 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Finally, paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead

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to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

The Setting of a heritage asset is defined within the NPPF (Annex 2) as: “The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, and may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

(B) SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDINGS

The significance of the Grade II listed buildings considered by this application are accurately assessed within the submitted Heritage Statement and discussed below.

Entrance Lodges: The Lodges represent the original Georgian fabric, the linking building and extension to the south are not original. These two lodges are the oldest structures on the site (along with the former Bear Pit), designed as the fine entrance to Zoo, and as such have high historic interest. As good examples of late Georgian architecture, they have high architectural interest. Their significance is recognised by their Grade II listing. The surviving sections of dwarf limestone wall with iron railings to the east and west of the pair of lodges are also highly significant as part of the designed entrance. Although a century younger than the original lodges, the 1936 frieze has strong associations for people arriving at the zoo over the last century and is also considered of high historic interest.

Giraffe House: The original fabric of the Giraffe House, excluding the later northern extension, is one of the oldest surviving animal houses at the site, giving it high historic interest. The style of its architecture, with domestic-scale gabled dormers and Tudor-style windows, contrasting with the Alice-in-Wonderland-like, out-of-scale doors, is well preserved, giving it high architectural interest. Internally the building has been stripped and there are no features of significance.

Bear Pit: The vaults, steps, octagonal stone structure, balustrade and central circular opening of the aquarium building, are the original and well-preserved form of the early nineteenth-century bear pit. The form of the building is both well preserved and unique, giving it high historic interest as an example of an early animal enclosure. The structure was an exciting visitor experience both for the close views of the bears but also for fine views of the surrounding gardens, giving it high communal interest. The unusual octagonal architecture and double steps are well designed, and have high architectural interest. Although not included in the listing and not physically attached to the structure, the proximity of the surviving bear pole adds historic interest to the building.

Monkey Temple: This structure is also unique, and though it is simply made and not constructed from fine materials, it is an interesting early example of a Hagenbeckian animal house designed to mimic both a natural habitat and the setting of a famous fictional story. Today, it is less of an animal enclosure and more of a folly or stage set. It has lost its original purpose and its relationship with some of its setting and its significance is diminished by the infilling of the pit with concrete but still has high aesthetic and historic interest as a reminder of changing conservation practices within the zoo.

Eagle Aviary (Birds of Prey Aviary): A small but innovatively designed structure, this has high architectural interest for its unusual glulam structure and use of clean lines and innovative forms.

Guthrie Road Entrance Gates: The southern entrance with its curved flanking walls and Cast Iron gates is a well-preserved early element of the site from the 1850s, and has high historic interest. The

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iron railings are good examples with high architectural interest even if now missing the original overthrow and accessories. This significance is recognised by their Grade II listing.

(C) DOES THE DEVELOPMENT PRESERVE THE LISTED BUILDINGS, THEIR SETTING, OR ANY FEATURES OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORICAL INTEREST WHICH THEY POSSESS?

Entrance Lodges: The proposal ensures the long-term viability of the listed building through its proposals to convert it to a community focussed use (with a café). The physical works to the listed building are sensitive to its significance, and are limited to: breaking through an inner wall of the building that once formed the outer rear wall of the west pavilion, and adding a white-coloured vent to the 1933 rear gable of the eastern pavilion. The breaking through of the original fabric is restricted to a single doorway width which is necessary to allow a fully wheelchair-accessible toilet within the unisex toilet facilities, which are to occupy the existing ladies' toilets. Officers agree this represents a very low degree of harm that is justified, given the works are the minimum necessary to bring forward the proposed use, and is clearly outweighed by public benefit associated with the re-use of the building, including its provision of accessible toilets. This minor harm is therefore not a reason to resist the application, generally these proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural and historical interest the listed building possess.

Officers acknowledge within the assessment of the corresponding planning application that the setting of this listed building is harmed by the northern block proposed as part of the full planning application. However, this is not for consideration as part of the application for listed building consent, and the LPA has discharged the duties imposed by the Act in its consideration of the full planning application.

Giraffe House: The former Giraffe House is to be converted to a single-family home. To achieve this, the later, detracting, accretions relating to the gorilla occupation (large glazed and steel-framed enclosures) are to be stripped away from the north and east elevations. The gabled, oversize villa is essentially a shell filled with the structures to accommodate the gorillas. The proposals will install generously-scaled first and second floors, reinstating an elevation to the northern side of the building that has likely been missing since the creation of the Elephant House extension in 1938. Five new windows are to be installed into this elevation. The existing overscale openings are to have full-length glazing installed with the largest opening on the south-west elevation stretching from ground to first-floor level. Slate-grey framed windows are to be installed in the existing openings, which currently contain reinforced Perspex. A powder-coated aluminium balustrade in the same grey is to be installed across the second-floor hayloft opening on the south-west elevation. The existing doors, roof slates and stonework are to be repaired and refurbished. The existing five photovoltaics on the inner roof slope of the northern gable (on the north-west elevation) are to be updated with six, more efficient replacements. As with the adjacent lake houses, the newly created house will be accessed from the internal bonded-gravel driveway with a pergola-covered parking area and front garden and a rear garden on the lakeside. The proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural and historical interest the listed building possess, the removal of the various later accretions to the building are considered to represent an enhancement to the significance of this listed building.

Bear Pit: The proposed works seek to remove all of the unlisted aquarium extensions and structures including glazed lean-tos, structures, tanks and associated water features from the former Bear Pit. The original form of the structure is to be revealed with public access reinstated via the former steps. Public access will be possible onto the original octagonal platform with views into the refurbished central pit. The central pit, where the bear pole historically stood, is to be a designated location for

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public art, whether a single piece, changing installation or community opportunity. In this way, the bear pit structure is to have a function as well as public access. To facilitate this, railings are to be installed around the circular opening of the pit. The exact form of these railings is recommended to be secured by condition. The vaults beneath are to be accessible and maintained in use as a store with a new timber staircase from the French doors on the 'front' (west facing) elevation of the Bear Pit which is currently a decorative twentieth-century window lighting the aquarium beneath.

The bear pole, which is currently located near to the listed bear pit but excluded from the listing, would be retained directly adjacent to the former bear pit, retaining its information board. Whilst the bear pole is not a formally listed structure, retaining proximity to the bear pit improves the understanding of both it and the listed bear pit itself and retains historic interest in both elements.

The closing of the Zoo removed the active use of the former Bear Pit as an aquarium. The proposal appropriately addresses the harm associated with the cessation of use through incorporating it into the public open space and landscape proposal as an active feature, providing an optimal viable use. The removal of the later aquarium structures of limited historic interest will allow an appreciation of the scale, size and function of the pit and better reveal its significance. Restoring public access via the original steps to the platform is an additional substantial heritage benefit which will allow the structure to be experienced as intended, accessed via steps to a public platform looking into a central feature. The proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural and historical interest the listed building possess.

The proposal will introduce a large buildings to the north and east of the Bear Pit, which due to their scale and massing will negatively impact the setting of this listed building. However, this is not for consideration as part of the application for listed building consent, the LPA has discharged the duties imposed by the Act in its consideration of the full planning application.

Monkey Temple: The Monkey Temple today functions as a garden folly; an attractive if redundant former animal enclosure and feature focused on the concrete 'Temple' itself – its deep circular pit having been filled in with concrete. It is to a degree isolated from main pathways of the zoo with access up the main front steps restricted. Proposals under the full application proposed to reintegrate the folly into the public landscape. Works to the built fabric of the Monkey Temple are limited, including works to reopen access, the reinstatement of the historic Buddha statue, and the removal of detracting glazed additions to the rear of the Monkey Temple. The proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural and historical interest the listed building possess.

Eagle Aviary (Birds of Prey Aviary): The proposal seeks to remove the netting and meshes of the aviary to convert the building into a circular seating pavilion. The final detail of the seating is recommended to be determined by condition. The slim steel columns are to be refurbished and replaced only if structurally required. The blue mosaic-tiled base is to be restored where it has suffered damage and wear and tear.

The loss of use of the ongoing use of the aviary is mitigated through incorporating it into the public open space and landscape proposal as an active feature, providing an optimal viable use. The proposed works to the structure retain the significant elements. The proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural and historical interest the listed building possess.

Guthrie Road Entrance Gates: The listed gates are to be mechanised with a power and hydraulic supply system so that the pedestrian gates can be left open during daytime hours for pedestrian and cycle access and closed at night for mechanised access for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, the larger vehicle gates are to be mechanised to allow resident's car access into the site. The application also proposes refurbishment of the gates. Details of mechanisation are recommended to be secured by condition. The proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural and historical interest the listed gates and walls possess.

(D) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Overall, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the listed buildings.

The application for listed building consent is recommended for approval subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought to prepare the conditions in consultation with the Applicant. A list of expected conditions is included below, albeit the following list is not exhaustive:

- Requirement to commence development within 18 months of the date of decision. The key reason for departing from the standard (3 years) commencement period relates to the need to avoid deterioration to the heritage values of the listed buildings, which a 3 year commencement period could allow.
- A condition to require the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
- A condition to require general details, including a method statement, of demolition works to all listed buildings in accordance with the approved plans.
- A condition to secure section details of the proposals, for example of new windows, doors etc.
- Conditions to secure details of materials, including sample panels.
- A condition to secure works proposed that constitute heritage benefits, including the removal of more recent accretions to the Giraffe House, Bear Pit, and Eagle Aviary.
- A condition to secure details of any extraction and ventilation equipment required to facilitate the Clifton Conservation Hub's kitchen.
- A condition to secure full details of the mechanisation works to the Guthrie Road Gates.
- A condition to secure final details of the railings proposed to the Bear Pit.
- A condition to secure details of the seating to be fitted to the Eagle Aviary.
- A condition to secure the recording of the historic buildings.