

Public Forum D C Committee A

Wednesday 13th December 2023



1. Members of the Development Control Committee A

Councillors: Richard Eddy (Chair), Phillipa Hulme (Labour Party Group Spokesperson), Fi Hance (Green Party Group Spokesperson), Sarah Classick (Liberal Democrat Group Spokesperson – substitute for Andrew Varney), John Geater, Tom Hathway, Farah Hussain, Chris Jackson and Ed Plowden (substitute for Paula O'Rourke)

2. Officers:

Lewis Cook, Jonathan Dymond, Philippa Howson, Someone Wilding, Jeremy Livitt



Statements	Request To Speak Made Where Indicated S = Speaker	Name	Application
A1	S	Fergus Sykes	23/01301/F – Land and Building on North Side of Gas Lane
A2	S	Ben Wrighton – Watkin Jones	
B1	S	Felix Hansen	23/02018/F – Eastfield Road, Cotham
B2	S	Councillor Guy Poultney	



**List of People Requesting to Speak – Public Participation – DC A Committee –
6pm on Wednesday 13th December 2023: 5pm on Thursday 7th December
2023 for Questions, 12pm on Tuesday 12th December 2023 for Statements**

A – 23/01301/F - Gas Lane

A1 – Fergus Sykes

A2 – Ben Wrighton, Watkin Jones

B – 23/02018 – Eastfield Road

B1 – Felix Hansen

B2 – Councillor Guy Poultney

STATEMENT NUMBER A1 - Committee Written Statement – Application Reference: 23/01301/F

It is agreed that the proposed development will deliver much needed, high-quality student accommodation comprising 314 bedspaces in a highly sustainable, brownfield location within an Enterprise Zone, allocated as a mixed-use regeneration area, where the principle of new student housing is supported. We directly address the proposed reasons for refusal below.

The development provides a high-quality living environment for the future occupiers and includes a variety of amenity spaces for the students, including an extensive rooftop amenity area, internal amenity spaces at the ground level and the communal lounge at roof level, and the courtyard amenity space.

Any increase in shadowing at the courtyard area would be minimal. Indeed, the % difference between the consented and proposed scheme would be very minor as set out by our specialist Daylight and Sunlight advisors.

Any perceived additional harm would be more than compensated by the extended roof terrace bathed in sunlight. This is a fully managed scheme in which all students have open access to all of the spaces provided – each of which offer a range of experience and amenity characteristics. The proposed scheme includes 1.46sqm of rooftop amenity space per student compared to 1.29sqm in the extant scheme.

In terms of the levels of daylight at the proposed student rooms, the proposal at the application site demonstrates a 97.5% compliance with the guidance which is practically identical to the approved scheme where 98% of rooms met the guidance levels. The 2 no. bedrooms which fall below the guidance levels are particularly large studio bedrooms on corners which would meet the guidance if reduced to a regular room size. We felt that a larger room would be any student's preference, but we can simply amend the plan if Members would prefer daylight compliance in these two units. This should have and could have been addressed with Officers months ago.

We believe that the proposals result in no harm to the designated heritage assets. Officers continue to consider that the proposals to result in less than substantial harm to the Silverthorne Lane Conservation Area and Grade II* St Vincent Works. In this case, a balancing exercise must be undertaken as per para 202 of the NPPF. The public benefits are considerable and clearly outweigh any limited harm that the Council could perceive there to be.

It should also be noted Historic England do not take as strong a position and state the *“proposed change is not significant”* and that the proposed additional floor would *“marginally exacerbate”* the impact, which does not indicate the same level as increased harm as Officers seem to be applying.

Officers in their assessment of the application are only focussed on the differences (and increased benefits) between the development proposed by the application and development granted by the extant permission, and not the development as a whole as proposed in the application that is currently under consideration.

Case law is clear that this is not the correct approach, and the determination of the application requires a full assessment of the application as a whole and on its own merits, with all the benefits taken into account. This is clarified within a letter that has been prepared by Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP which sets out the legal position on this matter and has been sent to the Planning Officer (and is also appended to this statement).

The proposal will contribute towards a number of significant public benefits in the local area both during the construction and operational stages, including:

- Redevelopment of run down previously developed site in an accessible location
- Student accommodation contributing towards the Council's housing land supply. On the 2.5:1 ratio basis, the 314 bedspaces proposed would equate to 126 dwellings;
- Supporting a number of full time employment roles on-site and in the wider economy;
- Direct and indirect construction jobs required to build the proposed development;
- Students and their visitors generating over £2.75m per annum of expenditure in the local economy;
- Introduction of a number of economically active students in the local workforce;
- Release of HMOs back on to the market resulting in additional annual Council Tax payments;
- Significant highways improvements on Gas Lane, Freestone Road, and Dings Tunnel improving the environment for walking and cycling, as well as creating a traffic calmed environment;

- New pedestrian route (Freestone Passage); and
- Contribution towards public art and public spaces in the local area..

The public benefits are considerable and clearly outweigh any perceived harm.

Officers have raised concerns that the design is of poorer quality to that previously supported. However, the design would remain extremely similar to what has been approved and considered acceptable by Officers and Members as part of the previous application.

We consider the increase in height has allowed for an improvement to the elevations by changing the hierarchy of the middle band. The lower half is now taller, and this is more in keeping with historical buildings in the vicinity notably St Vincent's Works. The addition of a storey does not impact on the building complying with this. The brick band detailing is retained along with parapet detailing which references similar historical detailing in the local vicinity.

Material considerations have changed since the previous permission, including the adoption of the Temple Quarter Development Framework (adopted 2023) which sets out various development scenarios for the area all of which show a mix of predominantly "medium-high density buildings" at this site and in the surrounding area. This clearly highlights the expectation and vision for a change to the 'low rise' nature of the existing area. The Framework shows an identical building footprint to that proposed.

This is also reflected by the fact there are a number of consented schemes and schemes under consideration for development which will introduce buildings with significantly greater height into the area. For example, permission is shortly due to be granted for a part 6, part 8 storey building immediately opposite the site, on the other side of Freestone Road. This (see image below) introduces tall, narrow blocks with pitched roofs which provides a strong vertical emphasis to the design clearly indicating a mix of designs are coming forward in the area.

PROPOSED STREET VIEW



CHAPMAN TAYLOR

Freestone Road, Bristol | Design Intent Document

Image 1 – Extract from Design Intent Doc (prepared by Chapman Taylor, dated 03/10/2023)

Officers consider the increased quantum of development, combined with the fact no reciprocal improvement of public realm is being offered mean that the proposal would fail to contribute to the creation of quality urban design and in view of the tight spacing between developments is likely that it would lead to limited light levels received by developments on neighbouring sites, to the extent that it would create a poor quality public realm and prejudice development of those sites. This is a judgement based upon no evidence though and Officers didn't ask for this to be assessed when considering the Daylight and Sunlight information provided by Consil.

The most relevant planning guidance for the area, including the Temple Quarter Spatial Framework (2016) and the TQDF show the built form envisaged for the proposals following these guiding principles.

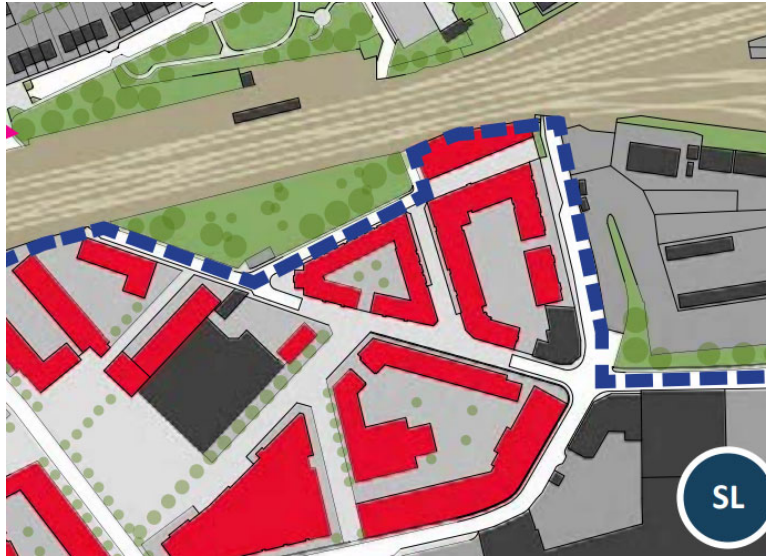


Image 2 – Extract from Temple Quarter Spatial Framework (prepared by BCC, dated 2016)

The proposals include public realm and highways improvements on Gas Lane, Freestone Road, and Dings Tunnel. The contraction of the proposed building footprint to provide additional public realm would result in the significant loss of proposed bedrooms for the University. This would be contrary to the principles of this proposed investment.

The applicant has nevertheless offered a further financial contributions of £50,000 which would be made towards public realm improvements in the locality, such as the provision Gas Lane rail tunnel lighting and/or Dings Park improvements, to help further improve the public realm in light of the fact the building cannot be set-back further within the site. The applicant has also increased the local public art budget by 100% to £60,000 as part of this application to incorporate additional and enhanced works of public art further improving the public realm in this regeneration area.

The surrounded schemes to the north, east and south are currently under consideration. These schemes are considerably larger than the application proposal and it does not appear Officers have raised concerns about the impacts from these proposals on the daylight at the application site. There has been no objection from these surrounding properties to the application proposals.

Overall, the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant local and national policies and will also deliver numerous benefits that are material considerations that will help achieve sustainable development in an identified regeneration area. The proposal does not result in any unacceptable harm in terms of its impact on built heritage, amenity, flooding or any other technical matters and as such there are no material considerations which would indicate the scheme should not be granted.

Given the above, it is very much hoped you will support the proposals subject to any necessary planning obligations and conditions.

8 December 2023

By Email Only

Susannah Pettit
Bristol City Council
City Hall
Bristol
BS1 9NE

Our ref: GT1.WAT.199

Dear Susannah

Application reference 23/01301/F - Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment for purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis use) and flexible commercial space (Use Class E) with servicing arrangements and associated works (Major) Land north of Gas Lane, Bristol (“Application”)

We are instructed by Watkin Jones Group in relation to the above Application that is currently with the Council for determination.

The Application was made following the grant of planning permission for a similar development on the same site (reference 21/06761/F) which was granted on 6 March 2023 (the “**Extant Permission**”).

When determining the Extant Permission a number of factors were given weight by the Council, such as the need for residential accommodation and the improvements to the public realm that were considered sufficient to outweigh areas of perceived harm.

The Application has been submitted due to changing market conditions and increased construction costs that have led to the need to make the most efficient use of the site. Changes to the scheme approved under the Extant Permission are purposefully limited following the same design principles.

Importantly, during the course of the Application our Client has considered all policy compliant comments made by the Council and consultees and has looked to vary the scheme where it is possible to do so following the same method of collaboration and constructive dialogue as took place within the application for the Extant Permission.

The thorough and compelling commentary provided by our Client’s Planning Consultant (Pegasus Group) in the covering letter dated 27 September 2023 highlights the changes that have been made and the policy compliant nature of the revised scheme. The letter highlights the additional benefits offered by our Client to those provided under the Extant Permission not only linked to the natural increase in residential accommodation, but also in

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aspects such as amenity space and public realm financial support (all of which require due weight to be given in any determination).

Changes in planning policy since the determination of the Extant Permission added to the considerable aforementioned benefits from the Application mean that it can only be concluded that the benefits of the scheme outweigh any perceived limited harm.

However, the Council has continued to raise concerns as set out in the Officers Report to Committee.

Our client is concerned that in considering the Application, that the Council appears to be focussed on discrete similarities and/or differences between the development proposed by the Application and development granted by the Extant Permission, not the development as a whole as proposed in the Application.

As the Council will be aware, Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, so far as the policies are material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

This is also set out in caselaw, with *R (on the application of Mount Cook Land Ltd) v Westminster City Council 2003 EWCA Civ 1346* being a leading case, where it was stated that the local planning authority:

“had an obligation to consider [the] application on its own merits, having regard to local and national planning policies and any other material considerations”.

The law is clear, the Council has an obligation to determine the Application on its own merits, having regard to all material considerations for the development proposed.

The National planning practice guidance notes that what constitutes a material consideration is ‘very wide’ and will ‘depend on the circumstances’ of each application.

The existence of the Extant Permission is clearly material to the determination of the Application. It also creates a precedent that development is acceptable in this location. However, the determination of the Application requires an appraisal of the Application as a whole and on its own merits, not just on the basis of comparisons between the Application and the Extant Permission.

Ultimately, there is a lack of proportionality in the Council’s position set out in the Officers Report to Committee given the scope of the changes and the failure to correctly consider the balance and weight of material considerations and allocation of due weight in particular to the benefits as a whole of the revised scheme.

In light of the legal position set out above, the determination of the Application without a full appraisal of all material considerations would leave any decision vulnerable to challenge.

We trust that the appropriate level of weight to the material considerations for this Application will be correctly reported to Committee on 13 December 2023 and as such a recommendation for approval put forward.

Yours faithfully

Squire Patton Boggs

Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP

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View along Gas Lane towards St Vincent's



FURTHER APPLICATION:

Watkin Jones and Merrion Group have submitted a full planning application for the development of the site to provide 314 student bedspaces and flexible commercial floorspace. Although the scheme should be treated on its merits, it is an important material consideration that the Council approved a similar scheme at Committee last year, which is now extant. This proposal is for an almost identical proposal, with the addition of a single storey on some elements of the building. The following reasons are given for this:

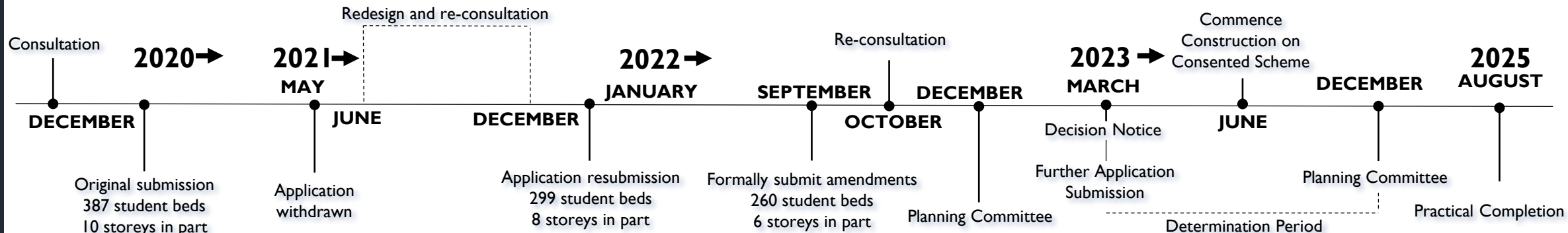
- To ensure a brownfield site within an enterprise zone is maximised in accordance with national and local planning policy
- To ease viability pressures following significant build cost inflation and softening sales values
- To assist Bristol in its pursuit of housing targets (+22 units equivalent)
- To provide further beds in order to support Bristol University and address the ongoing supply/demand imbalance.

Approaches to the following material considerations were already agreed as part of the consented scheme and remain unchanged:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ✓ Principle of Redevelopment | ✓ Materials and Elevation Design |
| ✓ Principle of Student Accommodation | ✓ Student Accommodation Room Design & Mix |
| ✓ Demolition of Methodist Chapel | ✓ Generous student amenity space per bed |
| ✓ Site Footprint and Layout | ✓ Public Realm & Highways Improvements |
| ✓ Transportation matters | ✓ Flood Risk Strategy |

ELEMENT	260 Beds (Consented)	314 Beds (new application)	Difference
Storey Heights	Part 6, Part 5	Part 7, Part 6	+1 across part of site
No. of Beds	260	314	+54
Internal Amenity	441 m2	460 m2	+19 m2
External Amenity	1,020 m2 total	1,084 m2 total	+64 m2 total
Commercial Space	239 m2 (ground floor)	226 m2 (ground floor)	-13 m2
Public realm improvement	1,165m2	1,165m2	0 m2
Flood Design Level	10.97 AOD	10.97 AOD	0 AOD
CIL	£1.02m	£1.23m	+\$214k
S.106	£71k	£145k	+\$74k
Expenditure in Local Economy	£2.08m	£2.75m	+\$670k
BCC Housing Supply Contribution	104	126	+22

PROCESS TO DATE:



DESCRIPTION:

Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment for purpose-built student accommodation (sui generis use) and flexible commercial space (Use Class E) with servicing arrangements and associated works. Case No. 23/01301/F

PROPOSAL:



314 student bedrooms. (equivalent to 126 new homes for BCC's 5-year housing land supply)



Part 7, part 6 storey single building with private entrance at Gas Lane / Freestone Road junction.



Two new commercial units serving locality and providing replacement jobs.



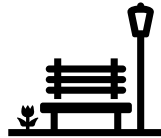
460 sqm of internal and 1,084 sqm external amenity space for residents, exceeding Urban Living SPD requirements.



Car Free Scheme (reducing existing traffic movements & improving air quality).



100 cycle parking spaces.



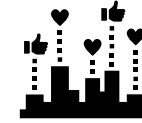
1,165 sqm of new or enhanced public realm including brand new pedestrian route



£60k Commitment to employ an arts curator and procurement.



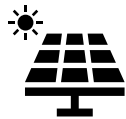
Building designed to respect conservation area and provide benefits



£1.23m Community Infrastructure Contribution.



Highways improvements to Gas Lane and Freestone Road/Tunnel



Solar energy provision



District Energy Connection from day one.



Net biodiversity gain of 0.32 units through green roofs and landscaping.



BREEAM Excellent.



University of Bristol support.



Flood design levels in accordance with Environment Agency requirements

BUILT HERITAGE:

In our opinion the proposal as a whole, and the addition of a storey, would not result in any unacceptable harm to the surrounding heritage assets that would warrant a reason for refusal, when taking into account the very low levels of perceived harm and the substantial public benefits. The proposal appears to sit well within its surrounds with this addition and continues to positively frame St Vincent's Works. The external elevations continue to acknowledge and compliment the history and built heritage, with treatments left as per the approval.

SUNLIGHT & DAYLIGHT:

The proposal would maintain a good level of daylight and sunlight within the student bedrooms, amenity areas and would not cause any unacceptable impact on adjacent schemes. None of the adjacent schemes have objected to the proposal in relation to daylight and sunlight or any other matter. Although the minor increase in height would result in a minimal change to the light levels within the courtyard, this is more than compensated for by the addition of 122sqm of rooftop amenity area that would receive an abundance of natural light at the roof terrace. The proposed scheme includes a greater amount of rooftop amenity space per student compared to the extant scheme, with students able to freely access both areas.

TOWNSCAPE MATTERS:

The minor height addition will have a minimal impact upon key views, as demonstrated across the page. This addition will not obscure further any heritage asset or landmark, and the quality of the design will continue to improve and enhance the setting of this area.

SUMMARY:

Watkin Jones & Merrion Group have submitted a further full planning application for the redevelopment of the site. The scheme now proposed includes a minor height addition across part of the building, maintaining all other previously agreed details relating to design, resulting in an additional 54 student beds (equivalent 22 homes).

The majority of material planning considerations have been resolved through the unanimously approved scheme, leaving simply a debate around height and impact upon built heritage, daylight and sunlight, and townscape matters for discussion as part of this further application.

We have undertaken extensive consultation over three years across pre and post application stages, and there have been few parties concerned around building height, with the Design Review Panel supportive of massing similar to the proposed.

The additional storey will ensure this brownfield site is maximised, delivering much needed accommodation through a high-quality design that responds positively to and enhances the local area.

View Corner Gas Lane & Freestone Road



HISTORIC VIEW

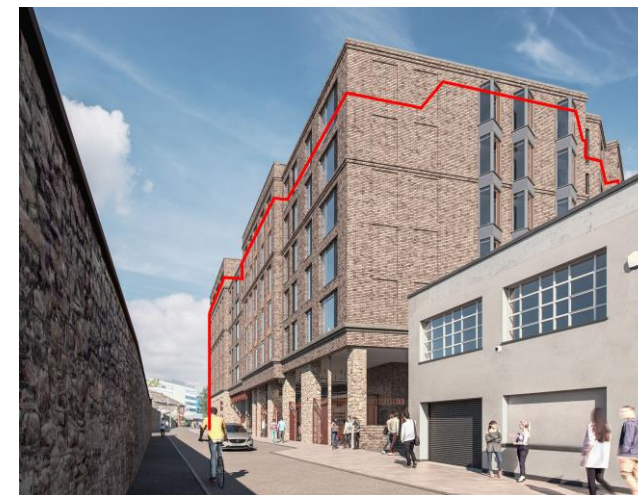


PROPOSED VIEW – RED LINE DENOTES CONSENTED SCHEME

View Down Gas Lane



HISTORIC VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW – RED LINE DENOTES CONSENTED SCHEME

View of Roof Terrace

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View of Courtyard

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View of Courtyard Entrance

GASLANE



University of Bristol Campus
Outline Application 21/02141/P
Pending Consideration

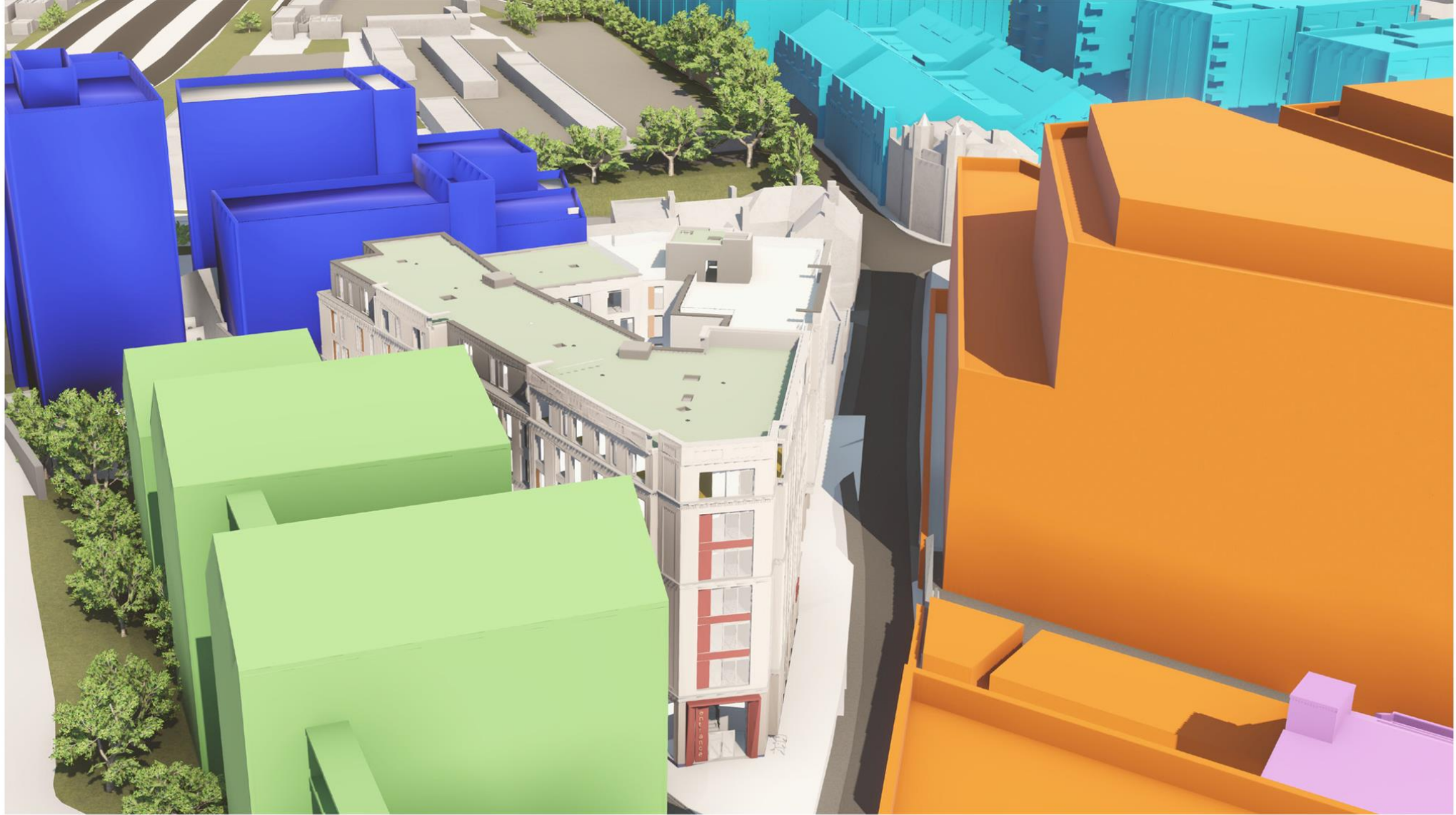
Unite PBSA
Application 22/06050/F
Pending Consideration

Host PBSA
Application 19/02675/F
Pending Consideration

Silverthorne Lane Mixed Use
Application 19/03867/P
Under Construction

University of Bristol Academic
Space Application 21/02496/F
Under Construction

GASLANE



University of Bristol Campus
Outline Application 21/02141/P
Pending Consideration

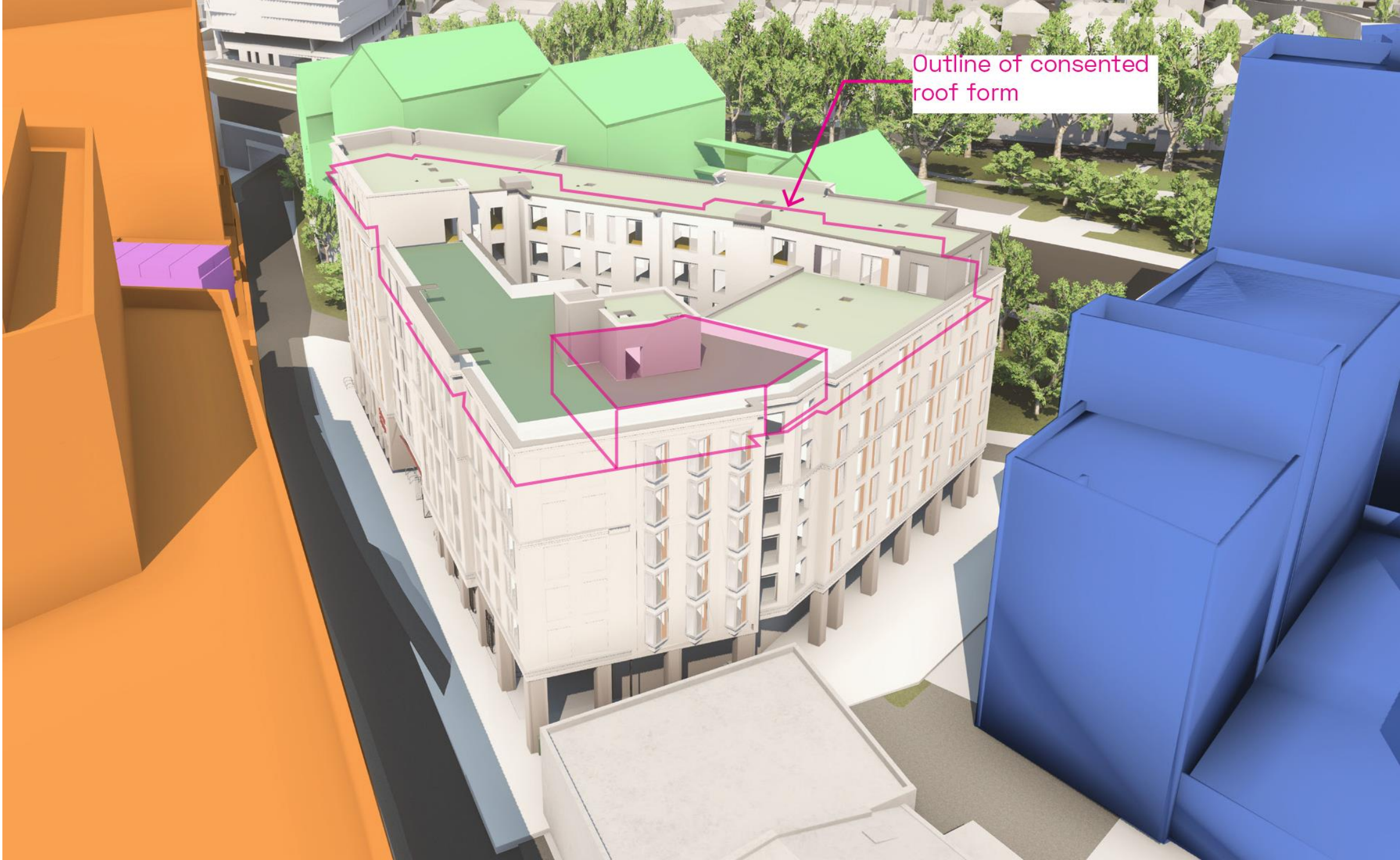
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Under Construction

University of Bristol Academic
Space Application 21/02496/F
Under Construction

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Outline of consented
roof form

DAYLIGHT COMPARISON WITHIN COURTYARD ON 21st JUNE



Transient shadow overlay within consented courtyard on 21 June



Transient shadow overlay within proposed courtyard on 21 June

STATEMENT NUMBER B1- To Whom it may concern

I'm Felix Hansen, a local resident in the Stoke Bishop neighbourhood and a small sites developer. I am passionate about creating new homes, as a private renter, I know all too well the difference a good quality, well insulated and secure home can make and I hope that by realising the potential of underused small sites in Bristol I can make this a reality for more people. This is certainly my aim for 1 Eastfield Road, where I hope to transform an underused site into 8 x 1 Bedroom good quality, modern, energy efficient homes.

I am writing in regard to the proposed planning application 23/02018/F, at 1 Eastfield road, Cotham, BS6 6AA that will be brought to Development Control Committee A on the 13th of December.

I appreciate that with over 50 supporting documents there is a significant amount of material to digest for this meeting so I have summarised below for your benefit.

Site

The proposed development sits at the bottom of Cotham Brow on the Junction of Eastfield road. The existing building is of Victorian build that initiates the 14 house terrace along Eastfield road. This terrace was built in 5 stages over the course of 118 years and, consequently, has a wide variety of architectural details.

The Existing building is a brick and ashlar build with no insulation over 4 stories that was heated by gas fires and comprised 2 kitchens, 7 bedrooms, bathrooms and communal living room, . It has been neglected for many decades, with significant water ingress leading to severe rot in all timber elements of the building and deformation of brick work and ashlar facade.

Proposal

- To create 8 new one-bedroom apartments
- To design new high-quality, Technical Housing Standards compliant accommodation while preserving, restoring and upgrading the existing heritage assets.

- To develop a proposal that benefits the public via donation of land to public highways to widen the adjacent pavement to enable unobstructed pedestrian flow through Cotham Brow.
- To incorporate sufficient quantum to enable substantial investment in the whole site, including front and rear gardens and boundaries.
- To acknowledge the form, rhythm, scale and detail of the historic terrace.
- To implement a considered approach to detail and materials based on careful analysis of the site and surrounding area.
- To avoid overbearing or loss of privacy on neighbouring properties.
- To contribute to mitigating climate change by substantially improving the thermal performance and airtightness of the existing building and maximising the sustainable characteristics of the new extension.
- With over 100 similar developments in the Cotham and Redland Conservation area, 71 of which are end of terrace, this design is seen as in keeping with the Character appraisal

Amendments to Initial Submission Following Refusal Comments

In answer to the Planning Officers' and the Inspectorate's refusal of the initial scheme, significant alterations were made to the design.

- To increase public benefit the boundary wall falling on Cotham Brow has been donated to the council to widen the pavement to 1.2m wide.
- Regarding the previous designs' contemporary projecting angled corner, the extension was reduced to keep the form inline with the existing terrace to further minimise visual impact to the conservation area and mimic the heritage assets.
- In response to the inspectorates' conclusion " that a more suitable and less visually intrusive design would not achieve the same" the advice was implemented when redesigning for resubmission.
- To maximise openness, the quantum rising up from the boundary has been reduced by 70% with total massing being reduced by 41.3% from the original scheme.
- The source of heating has been amended from Gas boilers to Air Source Heat Pumps to help reduce carbon emissions.
- The previous contemporary design has been amended to be sympathetic in keeping traditional design mimicking the existing terrace and ornate details.

- Although the Planning officers refusal places great weight to the viability of the proposal and how “no evidence has been provided to justify this assertion”. In the 22 months of this planning process a viability study was never requested and for a minor development seems unwarranted.

Community Consultation

On the 4th of March 2023 I organised a community consultation to which 10 members of the community attended, in order to gain feedback from the community at an early enough stage that could be incorporated into the design phase. In addition to this consultation, Redland and Cotham Amenity Society were consulted on their view of the preliminary designs. Whilst the community feedback was very supportive there were still many suggestions for possible improvements of the designs. These included the following:

- Ashlar window surrounds
- More trees with blossom to be planted
- Plants utilised on walls prone to graffiti
- A usable communal garden with seating, as opposed to an open lawn.
- Metal guttering
- Front door transom window, as is typical for the terrace
- Timber sash windows
- Street lighting
- Car free scheme, as parking already very difficult
- Support of redevelopment of site, which is an eyesore
- Management of bin stores

After receiving this feedback, the design was adapted to address all suggestions and incorporate all options into the design in a cohesive manner.

Restore Rather than Rebuild

In an attempt to follow the most sustainable practice for development, the design has gone against pressure to demolish and rebuild in a hope that as much heritage structure can be retained and upgraded without undue impact on the environment. In order to adequately upgrade this existing building the following challenges have to be overcome.

- Already the Ashlar front has been fastened to the front wall to prevent further delamination
- Structural engineering design to stabilise front and rear walls to enable repairs to end terrace wall
- WUFI calculations to determine interstitial condensation points and design mitigation
- Breathable insulation and lime plaster plastering system to manage moisture
- MVHR units incorporated to be able to increase insulation without risk of interstitial condensation
- Replacement of existing timber lintels suffering rot
- Rot treatment to joists and timber elements
- Double glazing (conservation grade)
- Roof and basement insulation
- Insulation between floors.
- Sound proofing to traditional timber floors

Sustainable Development

In the midst of a housing crisis with a local market saturated by HMOs and low-quality conversions that provide inadequate housing to a demographic who is hostage to the housing shortage, this proposal aims to offer something better. The proposal aims to supply 8 x 1 Bed apartments that supports local Policy BCS20 which encourages new development to maximise opportunities to re-use previously developed land, encourages imaginative design solutions at all sites to ensure optimum efficiency in the use of land, and seeks higher densities of development within areas in or close to other centres and along or close to main public transport routes.

The abandonment of rights for parking to encourage sustainable living, with secure bike storage. The proximity of 100m to Gloucester road's transport corridor and 450m to both Redland and Montpellier railway station means this site is the perfect location for car free living.

Environmental Benefits

In a recent study, Dr Salvador Acha, from the Department of Chemical Engineering at Imperial College London, said: "*Studies show the UK's 28.6 million homes are among the least energy efficient in Europe and lose heat up to three times faster than on the*

continent, making people poorer and colder." In the middle of a cost of living crisis, it should be a focal point of councils to promote private investment into insulating and upgrading heritage properties.

- The existing structure is to be upgraded with environmentally friendly breathable insulation, whilst the extension's structure is formed from insulated concrete form work, providing insulation levels that would be acceptable in passive houses.
- The existing single glazed sash windows are to be replaced with double glazed timber sash windows to increase insulative properties whilst complimenting the conservation area.
- The heating is to be provided through Air Source Heat Pumps and energy demand is reduced through the inclusion of solar panels on the roof.

These elements of design have increased the energy efficiency of the existing building from an EPC G to a C and an environmental rating B.

Public Comment

The 20 letters of public support compared to the 3 of objection from the local community are an overwhelming voice of support for a minor development. With a strong consensus excited for the donation of land to the council for the widening of the pavement, addition to housing stock, increase housing energy efficiencies and the boost of sustainable housing but the vast majority eager to see a significant investment into an aspect of the neighbourhood that has become an "eyesore".

Response to Officer's recommendation paper

Given Bristol is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, as required under the National Planning Policy Framework, having been found to be delivering only 72% of the housing requirement, the committee is required to have a presumption in favour of development. The refusal report acknowledges the need for a "tilted balance" under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

I believe that even without the tilted balance, my proposal to restore and extend the current dilapidated building enhances the appearance of this part of the Cotham and Redland Conservation Area. The strong levels of support from neighbours shows that they feel it demonstrably enhances their residential amenity. The refusal report agrees with this, stating that "the proposed flats would not pose harm to residential amenity."

But with the tilted balance in place, the officers' report states in para. 1 of the recommendation that "The proposed development would pose a less than substantial harm to the significance of the Cotham and Redland Conservation Area." In contrast, there are many benefits to the scheme as shown both in my application and in the officers' report itself that I believe outweigh this "less than substantial harm" and which, with the lens of tilted balance, lend the development to being approved.

I especially wanted to highlight the significant improvements made to the plans since the previous application in terms of sustainability which go above and beyond Bristol's minimum efficiency requirements. I am also donating land to widen the pavement to ensure the pinch point is safer and more accessible which the refusal report references as "a positive impact in terms of highway safety". The development results in 8 good quality one-bedroom homes (as the report says, a "windfall contribution of 7 additional residential units") and replaces a long vacant and dilapidated eyesore which attracts antisocial behaviour such as flytipping.

To Conclude

The proposal will add much-needed housing in Bristol and do so in a very pleasing way. The proposal involves the sensitive extension of an underused and neglected Victorian property, with a well-considered scheme that is space efficient, creates good living environments, is suitably respectful of context and will bring enhancements to the local street scene and public realm.

It is down to members to decide whether the benefits of new, efficient, low carbon homes – in the context of a house crisis and climate emergency – are sufficiently outweighed by concerns over heritage.

I very much hope you will be open to supporting this application, and look forward to answering any questions you may have prior to the committee meeting on 13th December. If you would like to phone or meet in person to discuss any aspects of the proposal, I would be glad to find a time that suits you.

Kind regards,

Felix Hansen

STATEMENT NUMBER B2

The proposal faces a recommendation for refusal on the grounds of:

“Harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area” Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; and,

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.” NPPF 200

However, the harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is *“less than substantial”* (as per the planning inspector’s report on the original scheme: 22/03665/F), and as noted in the National Planning Policy Framework: *“Where a development proposal will lead 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” (NPPF 202)*

The public benefits of the proposal are, in this case significant and should be given significant weight accordingly.

The proposal creates 8 new dwellings close to key local transport infrastructure (the showcase bus routes on Gloucester Rd, Montpelier and Redland Railway stations), and the local centre. It is high density development precisely where our policy says we need higher density development.

The site is currently a derelict eyesore in need of substantial investment. The property’s historic boundary also creates a dangerous pinch-point where the pavement is unnecessarily narrow. It is risky for pedestrians, and outright dangerous for anyone with mobility issues, or pushing a buggy. The proposed scheme will both rejuvenate the site (to the relief of nearby residents) and allow people to travel down Cotham Brow safely.

The first iteration of this scheme first engaged with the council in (I believe) March 2022, and has won the support of the ward councillors, local residents, and community groups. The developer has consulted with the community on numerous occasions and responded to every suggestion made (Some of these changes are listed below), turning a welcome scheme into one that now enjoys significant popular support.

There are more than 20 statements in favour of its approval on the planning portal, and only 3 objections (none on the conservation grounds that form the basis of the council’s objection). The public clearly see the benefits. However, for the council, these benefits are seemingly outweighed by:

“consistent architectural rhythm on the eastern side of Eastfield Road, with an evident vertical emphasis and general consistency of fenestration pattern, materials, widths and roof form.”

And;

“the corner element of the extension, incorporating a pitched roof that appears narrower than the existing roof, appears squeezed into the corner of the plot, and would relate poorly to the remainder of the terrace frontage. The angled corner facing fenestration would also sit awkwardly and prominently detract from the existing building and the balanced and harmonious wider terrace”

This has now been dragged out for 18 months, over two applications and an inspector's appeal. The developer has bent over backwards to deliver a scheme that meets with council approval. I would respectfully request this scheme be granted by a Development Control Committee.