

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SQUARE – DEEP BREATHING, HERE WE GO AGAIN!!

More than nine months after submitting a planning application, the applicant has now submitted revised plans to Bristol City Council in an effort to address the many fundamental objections to the original plans. Here is a brief update and – at the end – suggestions for what you might do now.

BUT, IN OUR VIEW:

1. The developers for this very important site claim to have built their original proposals on the results of “*extensive consultation and engagement with the community last year*”. Unfortunately, as we, you and others have shown with detailed evidence, the submitted plans completely ignored what everybody said. Furthermore, there has been no consultation at all on the recent revisions.
2. This trick of submitting late revisions is a deliberate ploy commonly used by developers to, in effect, tire out local people like you and make it difficult to get a further round of objections. Rest assured, the Westbury Park Community Association will do all possible to avoid that!
3. The original proposals received fundamental objections from almost all City Council departments and teams, from many outside organisations – including the WPCA and SCAN locally - and around 750 individuals like you. The revisions are positive but also very minor, almost cosmetic, and amount to no more than ‘rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic’. They go no way at all to addressing what is clearly the central issue of titanic potential overdevelopment of an important site in an important Conservation Area with an historically important Listed Building.

WHAT ARE THE REVISIONS?

The revised plans can be found on the Bristol City Council Planning Portal at:

<https://pa.bristol.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=R8HHLODN0DG00&activeTab=summary>

But, the Portal is playing up and there are (n doubt deliberately) dozens of separate files, so we suggest just looking at the ‘Design and Access Addendum’ (then other files if you are interested in any specific issue).

To help you a little without visiting the portal, the revised basic masterplan is appended below.

Here is a selection of some of the revisions with, occasionally, our comments in italics. Refer to the masterplan for some of the points.

- Total number of units reduced from 122 to 116. *That is a 5% reduction, nowhere near significant in terms of reducing the overall and still damaging bulk of new buildings.*
- Fewer cottages are planned close to Bayswater Avenue. *But some are still too close to existing houses according to national standards and the ‘Villas’ are still way too close to each other.*
- Villa B has been reduced from six to five storeys so would no longer be visible from The Downs. *Irrelevant in the larger picture and Villa B would still be visible from The Glen. Also, imagine this huge building around just 10/12 metres away from the listed Grace House.*
- The footprint and positioning of Villas A, B, C and D have been changed a little to create more space around Grace House. *Minor changes only; still too much building on too small a site.*
- No longer any resident parking access from Bayswater Avenue (just service access to sub station). Access for parking for 8 cars now proposed off the end of The Glen. *The former is good news, the latter will certainly not be welcomed and does not appear to work properly.*

- Heights of the parapets on Villa B have also been reduced by 300mm (about 1 foot). *No comment!*
- The façade treatment of the villas had been revised to reduce the bulk of the mansard roofs, using red brick instead of buff colour and revised window designs. *Purely cosmetic.*
- The landscape proposals have been revised to increase the amount of soft landscaping, particularly around Grace House. *But no reduction in the amount of space between the blocks as a whole. It is certainly not 'landscape-led' as the City Council want it to be.*
- The proposed spa extension to Grace House would be relocated to along the northern site boundary. *Perhaps a visual improvement but this makes that facility a short walk from the other facilities in Grace House.*
- Fewer trees removed. *But that number is still very high.*
- There is no planned increase in the number of parking spaces. *Even with the marginal reduction in the number of dwelling units, 65 spaces will be insufficient to meet the demand for spaces and will lead to overspill parking in surrounding roads.*

Also please note - Bristol City Council have now agreed Use Class C2 (residential care homes and other institutional housing) so there is no longer a requirement for the developer to provide any affordable housing as part of the development. Provision for Special Educational Needs remains unresolved.

WHERE NEXT?

The deadline for making further comments/objections is **5th January** (yes, 2023)! Yet again the developers have made sure this key stage happens over Christmas/New Year. We will query this crazy timescale with the City Council.

We will be drafting a very thorough WPCA objection and will share this with you asap; it may help with objections you may wish to make **and please make them even if you have done so before.**

Jeff Bishop and Kevin Chidgey: WPCA: 9th December 2022

Key points on plan overleaf:

- Villa A: 3 storeys, Villa B: 5 storeys, Villa C: 5 storeys, Villa D: 4 storeys.
- Still 5, 2 storey cottages to the south, now just 3 to the east plus 1 storey 'Woodland Glade Cottage'.
- Spa building now away from Grace House against north boundary wall.
- Old laundry building far right now an 'Urban Village Hall' (?).
- Vehicle access off top right corner (Etloe/Bayswater) now only to sub station.
- Vehicle entrance off the top of The Glen for few parking spaces and emergency access.
- Less parking in front of the Lodges along Westbury Park.



Pedestrian access
(existing occasional access
to substation retained)

Bayswater Avenue

Spa Building

Woodland
Glade Cottage

Service
Access

Westbury
Lodge

Grace House
Amicala Club

Villa A

Cottages

Kenwith
Lodge

Village
Square

Woodland
Glade

Villa B

Villa D

Hampton
Lodge

Primary site
entrance

Villa C

Alveston
Lodge

Villa C

Urban
Village Hall

Carisbrooke
Lodge

Cottages

Westbury Park

The Glen

Key

Public pedestrian access

