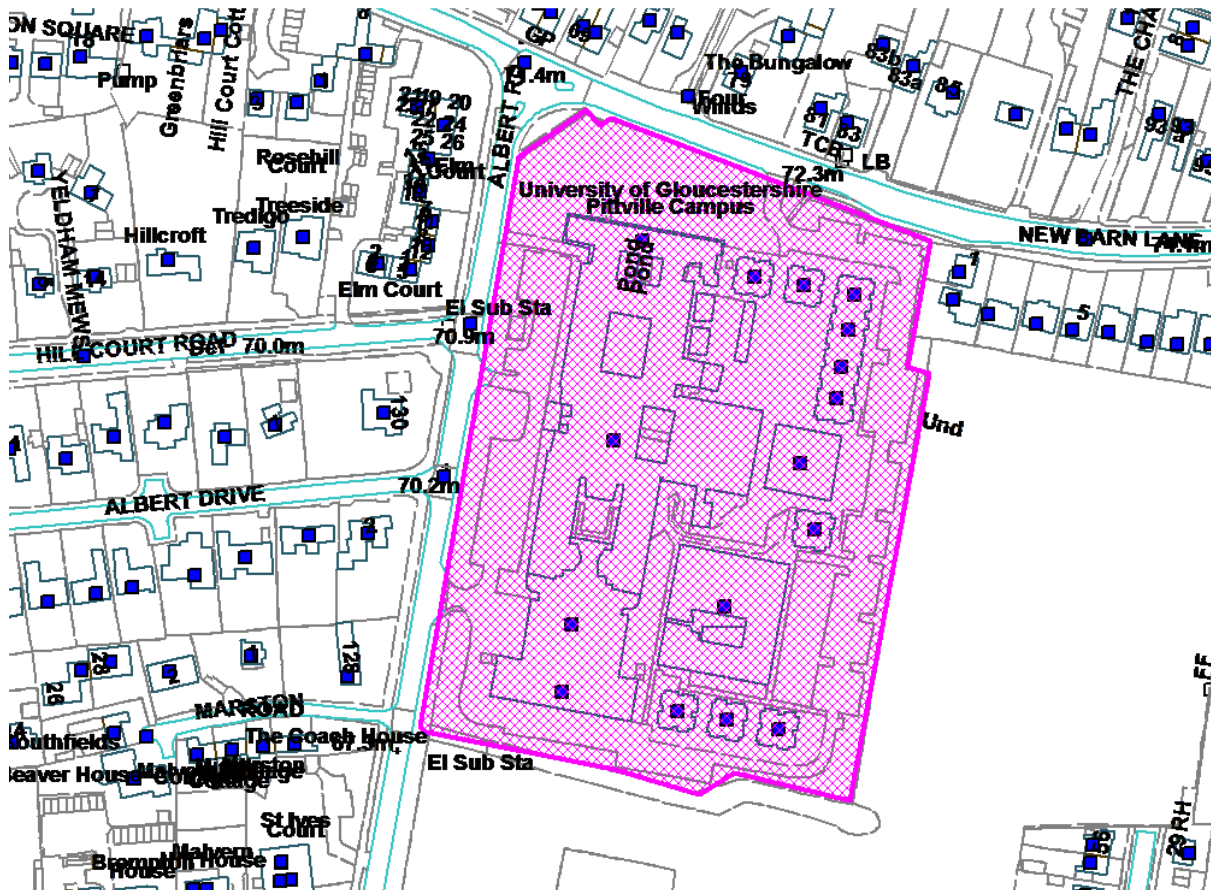


APPLICATION NO: 14/01928/FUL	OFFICER: Mrs Lucy White
DATE REGISTERED: 23rd October 2014	DATE OF EXPIRY: 22nd January 2015
WARD: Pittville	PARISH: Prestbury
APPLICANT:	Uliving And University Of Gloucestershire
AGENT:	Plainview Planning Ltd
LOCATION:	Pittville Campus, Albert Road, Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Erection of a student village incorporating 577 new-build student bedrooms, the refurbishment of the existing media centre (which will include a reception/security desk, a gym, retail facilities, multi-faith area, refectory and bar, quiet study area, laundrette, ancillary office space), and the provision of a mixed use games area. In addition, the proposal involves the demolition of existing teaching facilities and the retention and refurbishment of 214 existing student rooms.

RECOMMENDATION: Permit subject to s106 Obligation



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1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Members will recall that this application was deferred at the January 2015 Planning Committee meeting. The reason for deferral was to give the applicants the opportunity to address the issues and concerns highlighted by officers, Members and local residents during the course of determining the application. Whilst the principle of the redevelopment of the site to provide additional student accommodation was not in dispute, there were significant issues and a lack of information raised in relation to architectural design, size and scale of proposed development, student numbers and their management both on and off-site, parking, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, impact upon the amenities of local residents and wider Pittville area and the lack of robust strategies to ensure the effective long-term management of students.
- 1.2 The above concerns were, in part, brought about by prematurity; the applicants requesting that the application be determined at the January Committee in order to secure appropriate funding for the project, which at that time, was subject to tight deadlines in terms of submitting funding bids. The majority of the above issues therefore remained unresolved in January and in effect, time had 'run out' in terms of the negotiation process.
- 1.3 For ease of reference, the Minutes and Officer report presented to the January Committee are reproduced in full in the Appendices. The Officer report also provides the background and detail of the proposed development, including site description, context, planning policy considerations and relevant planning history. This report focuses on progress and revisions proposed within the last six months through the negotiations between all parties, including the local community.
- 1.4 It is fair to say that, since January, everyone involved in this project has been working hard and consistently to identify and resolve the issues and concerns raised. The key actions and revisions that have taken place are, in summary, as follows:-
- The appointment of new architects, Feilden Clegg and Bradley Studios (FCB), with a brief to take fresh look at the architectural design and layout of the proposed development taking into account the views of CBC officers, the Architects Panel, Civic Society and local residents.
 - Following pre-application discussions, submission of a revised scheme on 12th May 2015 accompanied by a set of supporting documents amended in response to the revised proposals (notably the Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Environmental Impact and Noise Assessment, Tree Survey, Utilities Statement, Transport Statement/Travel Plan). The revised Planning Statement and Operational Management Plan (OMP) seek to consolidate all previous Addendums in addition to responding to the revised architectural design.
 - The new architects have provided a model of the proposed development which has been helpful in assessing the massing and spacing of the residential blocks and distances between neighbouring properties. A sample board of suggested type, mix and colour of materials has also been submitted. Although it is not possible to specify at this stage the exact brick type and window detailing, the sample panel offers a flavour of colour palette and type and texture intended. The model and sample board will be on display during the Committee meeting.
 - A full consultation exercise has been carried out both in relation to statutory consultees and the local community. In addition, the applicants held a further public exhibition on 21st April 2015, prior to submission of the revised scheme.

- The revised scheme (in draft and final version) has been reviewed by the Architects Panel on a further three occasions and the new architects gave a presentation of their draft scheme to the Civic Society.
- The establishment of a Pittville Residents Liaison Group which includes representatives from the local community and existing residents groups, Councillor John Payne representing Prestbury and Pittville wards, University of Gloucestershire, Uliving management team, Plainview Planning (applicants' agent), CBC Planning and Environmental Health teams and the Gloucestershire Police Constabulary. This group has met on six occasions since March 2015 with a remit to discuss any issue associated with the proposed development that could impact upon the local community. Whilst the focus has been on the content and effectiveness of the Operational Management Plan (OMP) in terms of the long-term management of the site, the topics discussed have been wide ranging with clarification sought on a number of issues and data provided by the University. The new Architects were also invited to present the revised proposals to the group.
- Drafting of additional s106 Agreement which seeks to ensure the provision of a Shuttle Bus service, establishment/continuation of a Pittville Community Liaison Group and establishment of a volunteer student patrol scheme (Student Safety Heroes - Ssh project), all of which tie in directly with the OMP.
- Continued progress with the legal agreement entered into with the County Council to secure all necessary highway works, signage, wayfinding and Travel Plan (including financial contributions).
- Both legal agreements are well advanced with Heads of Terms and drafts largely agreed between parties. It is likely that both legal agreements will be signed before July Committee and Officers will update Members accordingly.
- A Tree Preservation Order was served on the applicant (University of Gloucestershire) on 15th June 2015 (ref 15/00727/TREEPO). The trees identified in the Order are all the trees fronting New Barn Lane and on the corner of the site at the junction with Albert Road and one Oak tree further south fronting Albert Road. Any comments or objections to the TPO must be made to the Council by 13th July 2015.
- Demolition works on site are well advanced. An application for Prior Notification of Proposed Demolition of buildings on the site was submitted in December 2014 (ref 14/02288/DEMCON) and approved in March 2015.

1.5 The series of statements and reports submitted by the applicant from 5th January just prior to the January Committee meeting are still relevant. These documents largely focus on the economic and financial justification for the proposed development. Notably, a report 'Economic Impact of University of Gloucestershire' was made available on 8th January 2014 and a copy circulated to members of the Planning Committee via email. These documents are attached as appendices to the previous Officer report.

1.6 The subsequent revisions to architectural design and the OMP will be discussed in the following sections. For clarity, only those consultation responses received in respect of the revised scheme are listed below. All preceding comments can be read in the previous officer report.

2. CONSULTATIONS

Cheltenham Civic Society

18th June 2015

We think that the revisions by Fielden Clegg Bradley have transformed the scheme. We were impressed by the rigorous intellectual analysis that FCB have put into developing the whole village. There is now a hugely improved feel to the scheme overall, with well-designed spaces incorporated in it. Although some of us still wonder if the scheme can accommodate the number of units proposed, and might also have preferred it if those revising the scheme had had carte blanche for the whole site, we are still satisfied that this has the potential to be a really good scheme, providing something of a quality suitable for young people to live in, and worthy of Cheltenham and Pittville. We liked the attempt to reflect - but not mimic - the grain of Cheltenham buildings, and were generally happy with the proposed materials, though we were not entirely sure about the white framing of the windows currently shown.

Architects Panel

16th June 2015

The presentation followed that made on 25th March and showed some additional material and revisions to the scheme.

Following the previous comments, the panel noted the lowered block height in the centre and the positive effect this has on the, albeit still heavily, massed scheme, with each block still standing alone.

The panel noted the proposed pale grey/buff multi brick suggestion and reiterated the need to maintain careful control over the quality of the materials palette. The overall appearance remains rather verging on the austere and bland and materials and colour will be crucial to the final quality.

To this end there was discussion about how to carefully introduce more colour to the scheme, perhaps in the window framing, although it was felt that too much vibrancy might be inappropriate - colour should therefore be rich and strong. Internal blinds/curtains might also be important in this if able to be controlled.

The additional, subtle framing and modelling works to enliven the facades a little, although it was felt some further definition would be beneficial to some of the more austere, flat facades.

The corner now works more successfully exhibiting simple control, although refinement of some parapet details/setbacks appears to be needed.

It remains disappointing that no alternative energy installations are integrated into the design - solar hot water, green roofs?

Heritage and Conservation

1st July

Analysis of Site:

1. Although this site is just outside to the north of the central conservation area, it is still a very prominent site and its development will certainly affect the setting of the conservation area.
2. There are long distance views of the site from several directions but especially along New Barn Lane from the east and the west and also from Albert Road looking north.

Comments:

1. Site layout: this remains largely unchanged from the previous submission which was acceptable.
2. Architectural style:
 - a. Roof scape - The design approach being of a contemporary style with flat roofs is welcomed as a principle and in this respect the overall scheme has improved since the previous application proposals which included some pitched roofs. However these flat roofs are an ideal location for the location of renewable energy solar, and so it is a disappointment that no consideration appears to have been given to renewable energy. This is particularly disappointing as the University has frequently boasted about its green credentials.
 - b. Height:
 - i. I have previously expressed concern about the height of the block on the corner of New Barn Lane and Albert Road and this extremely prominent corner building would benefit from the top storey being omitted. My concern remains.
 - ii. The height of the central block has now been reduced that this welcomed.
 - c. Proportions:
 - i. In my previous comments I said that in general terms the proportions of the new buildings are acceptable although throughout the whole site the grey clad 4th (ie top) storey is visually too dominant. This concern remains valid.
 - ii. In my previous comments I said that the proportions might be seriously affected by the introduction of downpipes and so rainwater dispersal is critical to the design. The proposed elevation drawings have now been annotated to include a metal rain water pipe, but unfortunately the position of the rainwater down pipes have not been shown on the building. Therefore this previous comment remains valid.
 - d. Materials:

The proposed principal materials have now been confirmed as bluff coloured brickwork, painted brickwork and metal standing seam cladding. I have no concerns about the principle of using these materials albeit I have already made comments (see above) about the visual prominence of the grey cladding.

CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE SUMMARY: This is a very large development and generally the site layout is acceptable. However the general appearance of the scheme is at best refined and at worst rather boring. The palette of materials is very utilitarian and whilst this scheme at preliminary stage appeared to have much potential it is disappointing and is a missed opportunity. The saving factor will be the proposed landscaping and the planting plan must be conditioned to ensure that it happens as proposed. This site does deserve better however the proposals will not have a significant visual impact on the setting of the conservation area and therefore I am unable to object to the scheme.

Urban Design

17th June 2015

This revised proposal is a positive development of the previously submitted scheme. It takes the broad disposition of spaces and buildings from the earlier iteration and successfully finesses the layout, making important improvements throughout. Whilst the previous sinuous landscape layout had some attractions, in comparison it was cluttered and confusing.

By abandoning the 'L' and 'T'-shapes of the previous cluster units and replacing them with a series of buildings with a rectangular footprint, it is able to deliver a simple building layout of clean straight lines enclosing rectangular landscaped spaces. Similarly the impact along the

public frontages is a neater layout treatment - with cleaner lines and a cohesive perimeter block form.

Critically, some of spaces are larger. The simpler footprint removes the need for enclosed north-east or north-west facing enclosed corner rooms, which would frequently be in shadow and uncomfortable to be in. The simplification of the layout improves legibility and permeability; strengthens the structure; improves surveillance of spaces clarifying 'ownership'; and makes the entry points to the site more defensible and less vulnerable.

The simplification of the arrival space layout is successful, particularly the removal of the inverted-'Y' around the bus shelter. The straight-lines and rationalisation of the arrival area on both the pedestrian and vehicle side, will make arrival more legible and reduce potential for conflicting pedestrian movement.

The Conservation Officer will provide an analysis of architectural style, but there appears to be an understated delivery of many of the aspects of Regency themes in a contemporary form which the previous proposals struggled with.

The proposal is not yet completely satisfactory.

The strategy for cycle parking still seems light on parking numbers; though the distribution of spaces has improved, the siting of spaces remains skewed away from a natural desire lines towards the town centre for many of the units. Some additional smaller, well distributed parking in secure covered units would enhance the currently proposed provision. As the site of the former art college, it is appropriate to include a piece (or themed set of pieces) of public art on the site. Provision should be sufficient to fund public art project management, maintenance and all necessary making good (including, where appropriate hard and soft landscape). The public should have access to some or all of the works. Work could involve students working with the Public Art Panel and one of its project managers to produce the work. The whole project should have a value equivalent of approximately £40,000 with project management, design, construction and implementation all funded; on-going maintenance will need to be provided by the developer.

Transport contributions will include contributions towards enhanced pedestrian signage - complimenting the Council's Phase 2 pedestrian wayfinding scheme. The University is developing its own pedestrian signage proposals for its own estate and the Council's Townscape scheme is in discussion with the University to develop a design solution on all its sites which compliments the Council's proposals. Details are being worked up separately from this application as part of the Wayfinding project. Some of the off-campus signing being funded by the University through this development will need to be implemented as part of the Council's own Phase 2 scheme and early release of some of the University's contribution will be required to meet the Council's programme.

Parish Council

29th May 2015

The Parish sees little, if any, improvement in this revised scheme. Thus our objections made by letter on 18th December 2014 still stand and re-list them below:

Policy CP4 requires adequate provision for security and the prevention of crime and disorder. No improvement from previous scheme. It is impossible to control and police the huge number of students.

Policy CP5 states that the location must minimise the need for travel.

This objection has not been addressed. It is the wrong location to meet this requirement.

Policy CP7 requires a high standard of architectural design.

The design is an improvement but not in keeping with the area around Pittville Park.

Policy TP1 makes clear that development will not be permitted where there is a danger of generating high turnover on-street parking.
No further parking is being provided. The area does not have restricted parking in the streets, so it cannot be controlled.

Please consider these points when making your decision.

Tree Officer

3rd June 2015

The Tree Section has no objections to this application. As there is a loss of low amenity trees on site these are mitigated by a suitable Landscape Planning Proposal, however more detail is required.

Please could the following conditions can be attached;

Detailed Landscaping

The landscaping proposal shall be carried out no later than the first planting season following the date when the development is ready for occupation or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The current Landscape Planning Proposals must be modified to also specify species, planting size, root type (it is anticipated that container grown trees will be planted) and protection so as to ensure quick successful establishment. The size of the trees shall be at least a Selected Standard as per BS 3936-1:1992. The trees shall be maintained for 5 years after planting and should they be removed, die, be severely damaged or become seriously diseased within this period they shall be replaced with another tree as originally required to be planted.

Reason: To preserve the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Local Plan Policies GE5 and GE6 relating to the retention, protection and replacement of trees.

Tree Protection

Tree protective fencing shall be installed in accordance with the specifications set out within the Arboricultural Report reference Pittville Campus and the Tree Protection Plan Drawing Number 1793/P/101 Rev F dated April 2015. The tree protection shall be erected/installed, inspected and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any works on site (including demolition and site clearance) and shall remain in place until the completion of the construction process.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity, in accordance with Local Plan Policies GE5 and GE6 relating to the retention, protection and replacement of trees.

Arboricultural Monitoring

Prior to the commencement of any work on site, a timetable of arboricultural site inspections shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These site inspections shall be carried out by a suitably qualified arboriculturalist and all findings reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The approved timetable shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reasons: To safeguard the retained/protected trees in accordance with Local Plan Policies GE5 and GE6 relating to the retention, protection and replacement of trees.

Landscape Architect

4th June 2015

TH4

In the previous version of the scheme the lawn to the rear of TH4 had been made secure with fencing and gated access. This has been omitted from this latest revision. It would be preferable if it could be reinstated as without it the rear of TH4 is vulnerable.

Trees in long grass

There are a number of instances of trees planted in long grass. All trees should have a 500mm diameter clear area around the trunk - this is especially important during establishment. Keeping this area around each tree clear of weeds and grass should be included in the landscape maintenance plan.

Bike store next to townhouse gardens

The bike store next to the townhouse gardens is awkwardly placed, interrupting the shape of the lawn. There appears to be a hedge along its eastern side which would prevent access from the path. Please could this be clarified.

Suggest locating the bike store centrally along the western edge of the lawn. A knee rail and planting strip or hedge between the bike store and the lawn would help prevent the lawn being used as a shortcut and so reduce erosion of the grass and unsightly muddy patches.

SuDS

It is encouraging to see SuDS proposed as part of the landscaping scheme. Full details of the proposed scheme will be required.

Maintenance

Only the 12 months defects liability period is mentioned. A long term maintenance plan will also be required. For 5 years following the defects liability period dead, dying or diseased plants should be replaced with those specified on the approved drawings.

Historic England

20th May 2015

Thank you for your letter of 14 May 2015 notifying Historic England of the amendments to the scheme for planning permission relating to the above site. Our specialist staff have considered the information received and we do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion.

Recommendation

The application(s) should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

It is not necessary for us to be consulted again on this application. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request. We can then let you know if we are able to help further and agree a timetable with you.

The application(s) should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

Environmental Health

18th June 2015

1. General:

The revised application for this development has addressed a number of my concerns raised in response to the previous application. In particular internal noise levels from use of stairwells affecting bedrooms in adjacent blocks have been addressed by positioning shower rooms on the opposite side of party walls to the stairs, rather than bedrooms. I am also pleased to note that the entrances to blocks TH1, C3 and TH2 are now positioned facing the middle of the development, rather than facing separate residential property on the opposite side of Albert Road.

2. Outline (Construction) Methodology

My comments from the previous application are still relevant, ie:

2.1 The application proposes to use concrete strip foundations 'subject to further site investigation'. Should this change and piled foundations be required I must request a condition on the following lines is attached to any consent for development:

Condition: The method of piling foundations must be submitted to the LPA for approval before work commences on site.

Reason: This is due to the possibility of the use of piled foundations causing loss of amenity and noise nuisance to the residents of other properties nearby during construction of the project.

2.2 The application indicates intended working hours of 08:00 - 18:00 Monday - Friday and 8:00 - 13:00 on Saturdays, with no works of demolition or construction on Sundays or Bank Holidays. These times are within the working hours recommended by this department, and as such I would recommend a condition is attached to make these working hours enforceable in order to protect nearby residents from loss of amenity due to noise from construction works, on the following lines:

Condition: Works of construction and demolition shall be restricted to 08:00 - 18:00 Monday - Friday and 8:00 - 13:00 on Saturdays, unless permitted in advance by the LPA.

Reason: To protect the residents of nearby properties from loss of amenity due to noise from mechanical plant used in construction and demolition operations

Informative: If the need arises to work on site outside of these hours the site operator should seek an agreement under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 with CBC Public Protection team. This will then allow work to take place during these hours when it is absolutely necessary only, and subject to conditions agreed in the consent notice. An example of such a situation would be the delivery to site of equipment requiring a road closure.

3 Environmental Noise Impact Report

This report has been revised to reflect the newly proposed configuration of accommodation at the site. In general the conclusions of this report are similar to those from the previous application, hence my comments and recommendations are also similar:

Condition: The design of air handling plant serving catering facilities provided in Media Centre shall be submitted to the LPA for approval before installation.

Reason: To protect the residents of nearby properties from loss of amenity due to noise from air handling plant.

Informative: Submitted information is expected to include an assessment of the levels of noise affecting nearby residential properties, not just a measured level for the equipment selected.

Condition: The design of air conditioning plant serving the Media Centre shall be submitted to the LPA for approval before installation.

Reason: To protect the residents of nearby properties from loss of amenity due to noise from air conditioning plant.

Informative: Submitted information is expected to include an assessment of the levels of noise affecting nearby residential properties, not just a measured level for the equipment selected.

Condition: The external noise level at the boundary of the campus from combined mechanical equipment noise shall not exceed 35dB LAeq, 1hour between 7:00 and 23:00, and 25dB LAeq 5 minutes between 23:00 and 7:00, when assessed as a rating level in accordance with BS 4142:2014.

Reason: To protect the residents of nearby properties from loss of amenity due to noise from mechanical plant.

Condition: The music noise level from amplified live or recorded music at the student union / media centre shall not exceed 55dBA LMax, fast between 07:00 and 23:00 and 45dBLMax, fast between 23:00 and 7:00, when measured at the site boundary.

Reason: To protect the residents of nearby properties from loss of amenity due to noise from amplified music in the student union / media centre.

Condition: The design of noise attenuation measures for the Media Centre shall be submitted to the LPA for approval before implementation.

Reason: To protect the residents of nearby properties from loss of amenity due to noise from amplified music.

Informative: Consideration should be given to the provision of suitable acoustic lobbies, upgraded glazing and adequate ventilation to allow doors to remain shut in warmer weather. The position of rooms used for entertainment in relation to other buildings will have a significant effect on controlling noise breakout from affecting other properties.

Condition: Use of the Multi-Use Games area and outdoor gym should be restricted to 09:00 - 21:00, daily.

Reason: To protect residents both on and off site from loss of amenity due to noise from the use of this facility.

Condition: Collection of refuse from the site and deliveries of material to commercial units on the site using HGVs shall only be made between 08:00 and 20:00 Monday to Saturday.

Reason: To protect residents both on and off site from loss of amenity due to noise from collections and deliveries to commercial units.

Condition: Glazing to residential property will be two panes of 4mm glass, separated by a 16mm sealed air gap. Windows facing directly onto Albert Road or New Barn Lane should be fitted with attenuated acoustic trickle vents (with standard trickle vents to all other windows).

Reason: To prevent the occupiers of the residential property from the effects of environmental noise (principally from local road traffic). The acoustic report also identifies the glazing to be used in residential property and has calculated noise levels accordingly, I would therefore recommend that glazing of the same specification is used for all residential property constructed as part of this development.

4 Contaminated Land

These issues have not been affected by the revisions made to the application and as such I repeat the recommendation previously made by the Contaminated Land Officer in relation to this application i.e.:

I have assessed the application and reviewed documents submitted. The ground investigation report did not identify any significant potential contamination sources and no significant soil contamination was found in borehole sampling and no ground gas or groundwater pollution. I have concluded that no remedial works would be necessary. However, I would recommend a precautionary condition in case any unforeseen contamination is identified during re-development works.

CONDITION:

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported immediately in writing to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and a remediation scheme submitted to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that

demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval.

5 Diversion route

Subject to your confirmation in your e-mail of 15th June, I am pleased that the revised plans include a diversion route for students remaining on site that avoids routing them along Albert Road and New Barn Lane. This should ensure that any potential for increased noise from remaining students accessing parts of the site during the construction phase is adequately controlled.

GCC Highways Planning Liaison Officer

6th July 2015

Proposal

Erection of a student village incorporating 577 new-build student bedrooms, the refurbishment of the existing media centre (which will include a reception/security desk, a gym, retail facilities, multi-faith area, refectory and bar, quiet study area, laundrette, ancillary office space), and the provision of a mixed use games area. In addition, the proposal involves the demolition of existing teaching facilities and the retention and refurbishment of 214 existing student rooms.

Introduction

This response is a revision of the local highway authority response dated January 2015. Amendments have been made to the layout; however the legal agreement and Travel Plan have now been updated.

Post Graduate Students

120 Post Graduate Students will reside on the new development. The UoG has estimated that 50 of these students will work in county schools, and will be able to own a car, to enable them to access teaching placements. The University arranges car sharing (3 to a car) by placing them in schools near to each other. Only 15 car parking spaces have been allocated for these students. The revised Travel Plan and legal agreement will control the use of Post Graduate Students with teaching placements using their own cars.

Access

An improved access with a shared space philosophy is now proposed, giving the arrival a much safer focus.

Shuttle Bus

The applicant is proposing a night time shuttle bus to bring students from Cheltenham town centres night clubs to the Pittville Campus. The revised Travel Plan and legal agreement will control the use of night time shuttle bus, to ensure both sustainable transport and safety issues.

Car Parking

The Transport Statement and plan proposes 122 car parking spaces as shown below 70 spaces for Pittville Campus staff

- 10 for staff visiting from other campuses
- 15 for post graduate students
- 10 blue badge spaces
- 5 spaces for Uliving staff
- 12 spaces for visitors to the media centre

All parking will be targeted to achieve a modal shift towards other modes of travel with the revised Travel Plan and legal agreement.

Cycle Parking

The amended application proposes 234 cycle spaces, and the UoG is committed to encouraging and increasing cycle travel, in accordance with the NPPF. Cycle parking will be monitored and more spaces and/or bike awareness/provision will be provided via the revised Travel Plan and legal agreement, if required.

Travel Plans

A revised Travel Plan has been submitted, which includes sections for a Student Travel Plan and a Staff Travel Plan. The Travel Plan will be linked directly with the University of Gloucestershire Students' Union, and the STAP. The Travel Plan will be secured by a s106 agreement.

Cycle Routes

The applicant has audited some cycle routes from the halls to The Park, and FCH/Hardwick. GCC in consultation with the CBC cycle officer and John Mallows from The Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Cycle Campaign suggest more appropriate routes. The final Cheltenham Transport Plan may require some alterations of these routes. These highway improvements are to be delivered by contribution, and implemented by GCC.

Walking Routes

GCC has audited a preferred walking route, to Evesham Road to Cheltenham town centre and to the local M&S and Morrison's on Prestbury Road have been identified by GGC as requiring improvements to some pinch points and missing dropped kerbs. These highway improvements are to be delivered by contribution, and implemented by GCC.

Contributions

Highway improvements for cycling and walking £59,889.70
Remedial fund for Staff Travel Plan to meet targets - £5,000.00
Remedial fund for Students Travel Plan - £35,350.00
Finger post signage and plan monoliths - £25,683.00
GCC Travel Plan Co-ordinator for 5 years £5,000.00

Recommendation

The highway authority recommends no highway objection subject to the following conditions being attached to any planning permission, and a signed s106 agreement

Conditions

1. No beneficial occupation of any student unit shall occur until the access is laid out and constructed in accordance with the submitted drawing IA-363-LP-P01, and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: - To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring the access is suitably laid out and constructed and in accordance with Local Plan policy TP1 and paragraph 32 and 56 of the NPPF

2. No beneficial occupation of any student unit shall occur until the car parking is laid out and constructed in accordance with the submitted drawing IA-363-LP-P01, and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: - To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring that parking is suitably laid out and constructed and in accordance with Local Plan policy TP6 and CP5 and paragraph 35 of the NPPF

3. No beneficial occupation of any student unit shall occur until the cycle parking and storage units are laid out and constructed in accordance with the submitted drawing IA-363-LP-P01, and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: - To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring that cycle parking is accessible and convenient to potential users in accordance with Local Plan policy TP6 and CP5 and paragraph 35 of the NPPF

4. Prior to any commencement of the development details of the removal of the existing south bound bus lay-by, and reinstatement of the footway, shall be submitted in writing to the local planning authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of any student unit

Reason: - To reduce potential highway impact and increase modal shift in accordance with Local Plan policy CP5 and paragraph 32, 35 and 36 of the NPPF

5. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- ii. loading and unloading of plant and materials
- iii. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- iv. wheel washing facilities
- v. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- vi. routing and timings of construction vehicles

Reason: - To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring the construction traffic access controlled and regulated in accordance with Local Plan policy TP1 and paragraph 32 of the NPPF

Informative

Any works on or adjacent to the public highway may require a legally binding highway works agreement, and the applicant is required to contact the Local Highway Authority before commencing works on the highway. devcoord@gloucestershire.gov.uk

3. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Number of letters sent	337
Total comments received	178
Number of objections	167
Number of supporting	5
General comment	6

3.1 A total of 337 local residents in neighbouring streets have been notified of the proposals. A number of site notices have also been displayed within the vicinity of the site and extending to the southern end of Albert Road. Local residents were similarly informed of the revised plans and documents submitted on 3rd December 2014 and 11th May 2015 and further site notices displayed.

3.2 As a result of the public notification exercises and at the time of writing, a total of 178 representations have been received by the Council from individuals/households (167 objecting, 5 in support and 6 making general observations). At the time of writing, a total of 39 letters had been received since January; note some of these are repeat and additional objections/comments by local residents.

3.3 A petition (and accompanying letter) with 448 signatures was received by the Council on 25th November 2014. The petition relates to the impact of the proposed development upon the existing convenience store located opposite the application site in New Barn Lane (Park Stores). The petition header states:-

“Park Stores is a valued facility in Pittville used by many local residents. The proposed development plans for the Pittville Campus include a retail outlet which is likely to

compete directly with Park Stores. There is the danger that Park Stores could be pushed out of business in consequence.

We intend to request Cheltenham Borough Council should not allow a retail outlet in the Campus Development, or otherwise should limit it to selling items not available at Park Stores.”

- 3.4** The Prestbury Parish Council has also objected to the proposed development.
- 3.5** Due to the volume of comments received from local residents, a copy of all third party representations (including the petition) will be available to view in the Members’ lounge and planning reception at the Council offices.
- 3.6** The concerns raised by local residents are all very similar and can be summarised as follows:-
- The number of students proposed on site is excessive and overwhelming for a quiet residential area
 - Impact upon the amenity of local residents in terms of noise and disturbance and anti-social behaviour and associated on and off-site management issues
 - Potential increase in crime and vandalism in area
 - Proposed scheme appears to be financially driven and not demand-led
 - Poor architectural design which is out of character with the local area
 - Four/five storey buildings inappropriate for site and locality
 - Density of proposed development too high and does not reflect surrounding development
 - Impact on existing convenience store (Park Stores) and potential closure of a local facility
 - Increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic and highway safety implications
 - Potential for parking congestion in neighbouring streets – students parking cars off-site
 - Cumulative effect of Pittville Campus, Starvehall Farm and potential residential development at Pittville School and the overwhelming impact on the locality in terms of movement and activity at the site and infrastructure
 - Potential impact/strain on essential services (gas, water and electricity)
 - Potential harm/damage to Pittville Park due to excessive numbers of students using it socially and as a route to other campus sites. Noise and disturbance to other users of the park.

The following are additional comments raised specifically in relation to the revised proposals:-

- The revised scheme is still inappropriate in design terms and does not respond to the character of Pittville. Materials should reflect more those of surrounding development.
- The University has ignored the issue of reducing student numbers to a more manageable size
- Excessive height of the four/five storey blocks fronting Albert Road and their overbearing impact upon the occupiers of properties facing the site.
- Uliving’s lack of experience/track record in managing student villages and accommodation of a similar size and residential location and the proposed development therefore being an ‘experiment’.

- Operational Management Plan lacks robustness and does not provide sufficient guarantee of the management of students off-site. Many of its provisions are unworkable.

4. OFFICER COMMENTS

4.1 Determining Issues

- 4.2 The key issue to consider is the extent to which the revised scheme and supporting documents submitted in May 2015 address the concerns previously raised as outlined in the four suggested reasons for refusal presented to Planning Committee in January 2015. In essence, the Council needs to determine whether the application details are sufficiently advanced to enable a full and confident consideration of the merits of the proposed development. The suggested reasons for refusal were as follows:-

1. *The application site is previously developed land with an existing education and residential use and is a large and prominent site within the town. Any proposals for development on the site will therefore have a significant impact upon the character of the locality and will affect the setting of the Central Conservation Area and an adjacent Locally Indexed building (Pittville School).*

Whilst the layout of the proposed development is broadly acceptable, the architectural design of the proposed buildings is considered poor, uninspiring and lacks the robustness and quality of design needed. The concerns relate principally to elevation treatment, the pattern, proportions and detailing of the fenestration, the mix and choice of materials and the uniformity in height and mass. There has also been little attempt to respond architecturally to the retained buildings on the site in terms of form, mass, height, architectural detailing, materials and colour. Consequently, the elevations are crude and represent vertical extrusions of a basic plan form resulting in monotonous and overbearing facades. There is little modulation or articulation in the detailing of the elevations which are repetitive and rely on an excessive and inappropriate mix of materials that, in places, creates a cluttered effect. As such the proposed development represents a missed opportunity, does not respond to the character of the surrounding area or existing buildings on the site and does not make a positive contribution to this key site within the town. The proposed development does not therefore adhere to the aims and objectives of policy CP7 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 17, and 64 of the NPPF.

2. *The application proposes the erection of a student village that will accommodate a significant number of students (794), far in excess of the existing residential use of the site, in a concentrated location within a predominantly residential environment. The site is also somewhat removed from the town centre and the main teaching facilities of the University. The proposed development is therefore likely to result in significant movements across the town in different directions and at different times of the day. The success of the scheme is therefore directly dependant on the ability to understand and manage these movements in ways that will not unduly compromise the existing levels of amenity currently enjoyed by neighbouring residents. The potential harm caused to local amenity would result primarily from noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour of students both on and off-site.*

The applicants propose a number of strategies to manage student behaviour both on and off-site. The off-site strategies rely primarily on student volunteer patrols, local residents' monitoring of student behaviour and community liaison groups; they are based on assumptions and are not sufficiently advanced in terms of providing evidence of their long-term effectiveness and the mitigation measures necessary. The proposed development does not therefore adhere to the aims and objectives of Policy CP4 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 17 and 69 of the NPPF.

3. *Insufficient information has been submitted to enable the Local Planning Authority to be able to fully assess the highway and transport impact of the proposed development. Further detail and consideration is required of the following:-*

- *Detailed clarification of postgraduate students on work placement and their car ownership and on-site car parking allocation*
- *A comprehensive car parking assessment and removal of inconsistencies in the submission*
- *Revisions to the number and location of cycle parking and secure storage facilities including mitigation measures for an increase in demand*
- *Full details of the shuttle bus and how this facility is to be secured in perpetuity*
- *Revised Travel Plan(s) and Travel Plan remedial fund*
- *Full and complete costings of required highway improvement and mitigation works*

In the absence of the above detail, the proposed development does not adhere to the aims and objectives of Policies TP1 and TP6 of the Local Plan and paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

4. *No agreement has been completed in terms of contributions towards highway improvements and mitigation works and infrastructure. This development will lead to an increase in use of footpaths and cycle routes and also the surrounding highway networks and the relocation of a bus stop is proposed. The development should therefore mitigate its impact in terms of providing payments towards forms of infrastructure and highway improvements such as dropped kerbs, footpath upgrades, contra flows, finger post signage and bus stop relocation. No agreement exists and therefore the proposal does not adhere to the objectives of Supplementary Planning Guidance, 'Planning Obligations: Transport', and Policy CP8 of the Local Plan.*

4.3 In light of the above, the matters to consider remain as follows:-

- The principle of the redevelopment of the site for residential/student accommodation purposes and local and national planning policy implications
- Design and appearance (including layout, scale, mass, form and materials) and impact on the character and appearance of the local area
- Impact on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of noise and disturbance
- Highway safety implications and the potential for an increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic within the vicinity of the site and parking in neighbouring streets
- The number of students proposed on site, the increase in activity at the site and the pattern, frequency and modes of travel used between other university campuses
- The content, wording and effectiveness of the OMP particularly in respect of the various schemes and measures proposed to manage student behaviour both on and off-site (Shuttle Bus, Ssh project, Residents Liaison Group) and the management of the site generally.

- The strategies and mechanisms in place to secure the long-term and effective management of the site and student behaviour
- Contribution of the proposed scheme to the economy of Cheltenham

4.4 Principle of Redevelopment and Planning Policy

4.5 The arguments put forward in relation to the principle of the redevelopment of this brownfield site for student accommodation and the intensification of an existing residential use of the land, alongside the local and national policy considerations, are discussed in full in the previous Officer report.

4.6 To summarise, whilst there are no specific local plan policies relating to student accommodation, the policy guidance set out in the NPPF is broadly in conformity with the housing policy objectives of the Local Plan which seek to encourage student accommodation and a range of accommodation types.

4.7 In March 2015 additional guidance was included within the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) which reinforces the role of local planning authorities in considering provision of student accommodation:-

'Local planning authorities should plan for sufficient student accommodation....Plan makers should engage with universities and other high educational establishments to better understand their student accommodation requirements.'

4.8 As part of both the plan making process and development management the Council is therefore required to consider and provide for sufficient student accommodation, bearing in mind that there are no allocated sites for student accommodation in Cheltenham (as identified by Local Plan and JCS).

4.9 The application site is an existing university campus with residential accommodation and therefore constitutes a brownfield site (previously developed site) within the principal urban area of the Borough. As such the NPPF recognises the value of efficient redevelopment and encourages *"the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed"*. In terms of national policy guidance and development plan policy, the redevelopment of this site is acceptable in principle.

4.10 Notwithstanding the above, in direct response to the discussions and debate which took place at the January Committee and at officer's request, the applicant has provided further information in respect of the proposed student bedrooms going towards meeting the Council's 5 year housing land supply (although not subject to an affordable housing requirement). Of relevance here, is the more recent guidance contained within the NPPG which states that:

"All student accommodation, whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus, can be included towards the housing requirement, based on the amount of accommodation it releases in the housing market. Notwithstanding, local authorities should take steps to avoid double-counting".

4.11 It could therefore be argued that the proposed development of 577 net student bedrooms could go towards meeting the Council's 5 year housing land supply. However, students tend to live in shared accommodation and therefore the number of dwellings which could be offset would be significantly less than the 577 bedrooms proposed.

4.12 The University has also estimated the release of 125 dwellings across Cheltenham as a result of the proposed development. This is likely to be centred in St Paul's area since this is the closest residential area to main teaching facilities but the effect may also be felt further from the town centre since students will choose to live as close to teaching

facilities as possible which are town centre based. The applicant has based the 125 estimate on 3 to 5 students per dwelling and has considered data on residential household composition and full time students from the 2011 Census. The data and estimates provided by the applicant are solely based on students living in private accommodation within Cheltenham, not those living in university managed accommodation.

4.13 Further explanation and a breakdown of the household composition data is provided at paragraphs 6.20-6.21 of the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application.

4.14 In summary, the estimated release of 125 dwellings within the Borough and the wider benefits to housing supply are material considerations in the determination of this application.

4.15 Design and Layout

4.16 New architects (FCB) were appointed shortly after the January Committee meeting and were instructed to take a fresh look at the layout and design of the proposed development. Although from the University's perspective, the number of student bedrooms was largely fixed, the architects were nonetheless asked to consider the site's suitability to accommodate the numbers proposed and in the form and layout proposed in the original Masterplan.

4.17 FCB have undertaken a detailed site analysis and had regard to all previous concerns raised by officers, the Architects Panel, Civic Society and local residents, in respect of the scheme submitted by architects Lewis and Hickey. Their re-evaluation of the site and proposed development is fully documented in the revised Design and Access Statement and includes specific commentary on the points previously raised by the Architects Panel, Conservation Officer and Urban Design Officer. The DAS also outlines, in considerable detail, FCB's pre-submission discussions and negotiations with officers and the Architects Panel and feedback from the most recent public exhibition held in April.

4.18 In similarity with the previous architects, FCB have considered site context; the adjoining conservation area and grade I listed Pittville Pump Room, the locally indexed Pittville School building and the architecture, general repetitive rhythms, massing, spacing and materials used within Pittville.

4.19 Having undertaken an assessment of the 'perceived issues' with the scheme, they note *'that there was a thread of commentary that related to the coherence of the proposals and this thread pertained both to site strategy and to detailed material resolution of facades'*. They note that the previous Officer report had identified key concerns in relation to massing and scale, elevation treatment and its impact on the street scene and entrance to the site, and in particular, a lack of a coherent or consistent approach to materials with an ill-considered use of multiple materials across the site.

4.20 In response, the revised proposals follow the overall strategy set out within the original application and some (of the more successful) design elements have been carried through to the revised scheme. The revised scheme provides an almost identical number of 577 new student bedrooms, again in the form of town houses and cluster apartments in eight new buildings (nine previously). The proposals again include the demolition of the majority of the existing teaching block and retention of the Media Centre. However, one of the existing residential villas (R7) that was initially proposed to be demolished is to be retained and refurbished alongside the other existing residential buildings on the site. The key vehicular and pedestrian access to the site remains unchanged from Albert Road and the parking is retained to the south and east. The landscaped pedestrian route through the site from Albert Road to the MUGA at the rear has been re-introduced although now more linear in form. The height, massing and footprint is largely the same with four storey

buildings across the site with the exception of the landmark five storey corner building fronting the junction of Albert Road and New Barn Lane.

- 4.21** Generally, the revised footprint of buildings is an improvement on the previous layout, which although not substantially different in concept, does allow greater space between some buildings, avoiding pinch points and overly oppressive passageways and a better relationship between the two end elevations framing the main entrance to the site on Albert Road.
- 4.22** The most noticeable changes to layout are in relation to blocks TH2 and C3 which are shown positioned slightly further forward and closer to Albert Road/New Barn Lane. The removal of the previous T-shaped block at the rear of the site has also allowed better configuration and design of external landscaped courtyard areas which relate more satisfactorily to their associated blocks and create the desired collegiate feel. These courtyards comprise a range of durable paved, terraced and hard surfaces in addition to landscaped gardens and would provide security, privacy and usable spaces for the prospective students. The main entrance/gateway Plaza has been retained with feature lighting and terraced external seating fronting the refurbished, glazed façade of the main entrance to the reception building. There have been only minor changes to the location and numbers of refuse and cycle storage across the site with areas marked out for additional cycle storage should there be future demand.
- 4.23** There are still concerns about the proximity of some bedroom windows to four storey facades, the creation of narrow passageways and the height of individual blocks leading to excessive shading and potentially oppressive external spaces. However, on balance, the layout and positioning of buildings on the site are considered acceptable.
- 4.24** The more fundamental changes to the scheme have been those relating to architectural design and the elevation treatment of the individual blocks. Subsequent to feedback from officers and the Architects Panel, the five storey central block (C1) that was put forward by FCB during earlier negotiations has been reduced to a four storey building. There were concerns about the dominance of this central block and the potential for long distant views of the building from the public realm. A slurried brick concept was also dropped in favour of a textured pale grey/buff multi-brick with pale flush mortar and various revisions considered in relation to parapet detail, set back of upper floor/mansard roof from the brick line and projecting bays, window size and detailing and a simplification of the treatment of the corner block.
- 4.25** Generally, there has been an attempt to simplify the building facades and instil more consistency and elegance across the development. FCB comment that, in similarity with the previous scheme, the overriding concept is still that of a contemporary twist on Regency architecture and the façade treatment exhibits many of the principles of this architectural style, albeit they admit that the fenestration relates "*more to the function of the rooms internally rather than following a prescribed ordering strategy*". The result is larger living room windows on the ground floor with smaller windows of identical size and proportion on the upper floors. Although this lack of hierarchy was criticised in relation to the previous scheme, the simplicity and refinement in articulation of the façade treatment with pre-cast window surrounds, in addition to the recessed upper floors, achieves a satisfactory appearance. That said, the façade treatment is more successful in relation to the elevations fronting Albert Road and New Barn Lane; the elevations facing internally are more utilitarian and offer less articulation and interest in terms of a backdrop to the external courtyard spaces.
- 4.26** In response to feedback from the public exhibitions, the entrances to the town houses fronting Albert Road and New Barn Lane now face the internal courtyards and not the road frontage. The ground floor living rooms would face onto the two road frontages but

there are no doors proposed on these 'back' elevations, thereby minimising the potential for noise disturbance to local residents.

- 4.27** The Architects Panel has viewed the revised scheme on three occasions since January through its various stages of evolution. Their final comments reiterate their concerns about massing with each block standing alone but note the positive effect of the lowered height of the central block. They point to the need to maintain careful control over the quality of the materials palette and in that respect consider that the overall appearance remains rather austere and bland. They suggest the introduction of more colour to the scheme, perhaps in the window framing and that the colour should be rich and strong but not overly vibrant. They also consider that further definition and articulation to some of the more austere, flat facades would also be beneficial in addition to some refinement to parapet details and setbacks.
- 4.28** In direct response to the Panel's views, FCB suggest the use of carefully worded and detailed conditions relating to materials, the requirement for a larger scale bay elevation study and a formal sample provided of a combination of brickwork, window reveal, window section and coping detail. FCB also confirm that the tonality of the proposed brickwork is intended to be that represented by the sample panel submitted; a light buff brick which is paler and less grey than that shown in the DAS. They will also be considering the use of internal blinds to add colour although it should be noted that interior furnishings fall outside of planning control. Conditions relating to materials and sample panels of window/parapet details are suggested accordingly.
- 4.29** The Civic Society offers positive views in relation to the revisions which they consider provide a hugely improved feel to the scheme overall, with well-designed spaces incorporated within it. Although they still have doubt as to whether the scheme can accommodate the number of units proposed they *'are still satisfied that this has the potential to be a really good scheme, providing something of a quality suitable for young people to live in, and worthy of Cheltenham and Pittville'* and like the attempt to reflect but not mimic the grain of Cheltenham buildings.
- 4.30** The Urban Design Officer considers the revised proposal a positive development of the previous scheme and there appears to be *'an understated delivery of many aspects of Regency themes in a contemporary form which the previous proposals struggled with'*. The layout is generally improved having used the broad arrangement of spaces of the previous scheme and the landscaping and perimeter treatment is now less confusing and cluttered. The loss of the L and T shaped buildings delivers a simpler layout and makes better use of the enclosed courtyard areas.
- 4.31** The Conservation Officer considers that whilst the site layout, contemporary style with flat roofs and materials (albeit utilitarian in appearance) are generally acceptable some of the concerns previously highlighted remain; height of the corner block, dominance across the site of the grey clad fourth floor and the location of downpipes. She concludes that the *'general appearance of the scheme is at best refined and at worst boring... and whilst the scheme at preliminary stage appeared to have much potential it is disappointing and is a missed opportunity'*. She considers that the well-considered proposed landscaping will be vital to the success and enhancement of the scheme but concludes that the proposed development would not have a significant impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area and therefore does not object to the scheme.
- 4.32** In similarity with the Conservation Officer, a number of local residents have questioned the height of the four/five storey block fronting Albert Road. The residents are concerned about the overbearing affect these buildings would have upon the occupiers of the dwellings opposite and street scene in general. Admittedly, Blocks C3 and TH2, in comparison with the previous scheme, have been repositioned slightly in relation to their road frontages. Block C3 has moved approximately 4.4 metres closer to New Barn Lane

but on the corner moved 3 metres further away on Albert Road and Block TH2 has moved between 2m and 5.85m closer to New Barn Lane. Despite the reconfiguration, there remains a distance of some 42 metres from the front elevation of C3 to the nearest property facing the site on Albert Road and the distance to the nearest dwelling on New Barn Lane is 48 metres.

4.33 With the above in mind, officers do not share the view that the height of the proposed buildings would be overly prominent or overbearing in the street scene. There are a number of three and four storey buildings located on the east side of Albert Road and none of the proposed buildings exceed the height of the old tower block on the corner of the site fronting New Barn Lane. Furthermore, the only 5 storey element is the corner section of block C3 and given its position fronting the mini-roundabout and widest landscaped strip surrounding the site, this added height and 'statement piece' of architecture can be accommodated satisfactorily on this corner of the site.

4.34 Summary

4.35 The revised scheme offers simplification in elevation treatment, materials and colour palette across the site and as such the scheme has fluidity and is more coherent and refined. In comparison with the previous scheme the proposals are less confusing architecturally between certain elements and building types and there is more consistency in the articulation of building facades. However, it could be argued that this uniformity in elevation treatment, fenestration detail and materials palette has resulted in buildings which are uninspiring and lacking imagination, replicating the monotony and repetitiveness of the previous scheme. In this respect, the Architects Panel comment specifically on the scheme's austere and bland effect and the Conservation Officer considers the scheme refined but boring.

4.36 In conclusion, officers are generally underwhelmed by the architectural design which, if revisited, could certainly be improved in terms of articulation and visual interest. But equally, officers recognise the obvious improvements to the scheme in terms of the simplified and consistent approach to design taken by the new architects; the scheme's success largely reliant on the quality of materials, landscaping and the detail of its design. That said, the proposed residential blocks facing Albert Road and New Barn Lane are more successful in their appearance and should sit comfortably within the street scene without harm to the setting of the adjoining Conservation Area.

4.37 On balance and having carefully considered the views of amenity groups and local residents, the revised scheme is considered satisfactory subject to further consideration and approval of materials and the detailed design of window framing and parapets. The proposed development therefore adheres to the objectives of Policy CP7 of the Local Plan, although officers do consider the proposal to be a missed opportunity for what could have truly been an inspiring development.

4.38 Operational Management Plan and Resident's Liaison Group

4.39 At the suggestion of officers and using the example of existing residents groups established for the Park Campus and Francis Close Hall, the Pittville Residents Liaison Group was set up post January to provide a forum for discussion between local residents, the applicants, the Police constabulary and Council officers.

4.40 The group has met on six occasions since March and the meetings have continued post submission of the revised scheme in May 2015. The topics discussed have been wide ranging, covering all planning matters associated with the proposed development (and some not) but have largely focussed on the wording and content of the Operational Management Plan (OMP). There has also been direct input from the Police and the new architects were also invited to present the scheme and engage in the discussions which followed. A statement from the Police has also been provided which reflects the dialogue

that took place at the meeting they attended. The Police refer to their continued successful partnership approach with the University in mitigating and responding to night time issues associated with students. They point to the success of the current StreetWatch Scheme operating in St Paul's and consider the proposed Ssh project a suitable adaptation of existing schemes for the Pittville campus. They are also in support of the Shuttle Bus initiative and comment on the potential for a reduction in first year students (and associated crime and disorder issues) living in the St Paul's area as housing is released onto the open market.

4.41 The discussions have been open, frank and constructive and have culminated in a large number of revisions and additions to the OMP, the majority providing clarity on a number of issues and points of fact. In summary, the key issues covered were as follows:-

- Management of student behaviour both on and off-site including University and Uliving disciplinary procedures and role of Residential Assistants and Residential Support Advisors
- Effectiveness and detail of the Student Safety Heroes (Ssh) Project. Consequently, a separate document has been appended to the OMP which outlines in full the operation and delivery of this volunteer patrol scheme.
- Shuttle Bus provision and mitigation measures
- Site management and security including, taxi drop off, deliveries and CCTV operations
- Staff numbers, staff relocation and role on site with clarification on previous student and staff numbers when in full use as a teaching facility
- Staff parking provision both on and off-site and student no-car policy
- Visitor/students guest numbers and impact on noise and disturbance and parking
- Postgraduate students and impact on parking demand
- Effectiveness, monitoring and review of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between Uliving and the University and the role of the on-going Residents Liaison Group in this process.
- On-going communication with the local community, complaints procedure and contact details for the University/Campus in the event of noise and disturbance issues
- Feedback from Councillor/residents' visit to an existing student village in Bristol located within a residential area and a similar distance from the city centre and teaching facilities.
- Increased use of Pittville Park and student safety
- Architectural design and impact on character and appearance of locality including associated fenestration detail, boundary treatment and security measures
- Impact on Park Stores
- Litter
- Content and scope of s106 and planning conditions relating to amenity issues
- Utilities and impact/strain on services and facilities within surrounding area
- On-site medical facilities

4.42 Whilst discussions have been lengthy and detailed, unfortunately there has not always been agreement reached between parties, with the majority of the resident representatives concluding that the revised OMP does not provide the assurances or effective tools to manage the number of students proposed; their belief that the document would work adequately for a significantly reduced number of students but not for the 791 proposed.

4.43 Notwithstanding the above views of residents, officers consider that the revised and consolidated OMP is a now more refined, robust technical document covering all aspects of the day to day management of the proposed student village. Through the Residents Liaison Group, further information and clarity has been sought in respect of the Ssh patrol

scheme and Shuttle Bus, the SLAs, on-site staff management and security and student parking, all of which are considered to be fundamental to the successful future management of the site and minimising noise and disturbance.

- 4.44** Officers consider that the level of detail within the OMP is satisfactory in terms of delivering a comprehensive, technical working document underpinning and assisting in monitoring the management of the site. It is intended to act as a source of reference and as a checklist in terms of procedures and would be used over the course of the contract with Uliving. It includes mitigation measures where relevant and there would be mechanisms in place to review, amend and add to the provisions outlined in the document. Any review process of the OMP would likely result from feedback from the Pittville Community Liaison Group and monitoring of the SLAs. The s106 would also allow for variations to the Community Liaison Group, Shuttle Bus and Ssh patrol scheme as deemed necessary; all variations to be agreed between the Council, Uliving and University.
- 4.45** As stated, the three key elements of the OMP in terms of minimising impact upon the amenities of local residents are the Community Liaison Group, a late night Shuttle Bus and Ssh patrol scheme the establishment and maintenance of which would be subject to a s106 agreement.
- 4.46** The proposed Pittville Community Liaison Group would consist of local residents, ward councillor, a representative from the Council's Environmental Health Team (and Planning and Enforcement when necessary), Gloucestershire Police Constabulary, Student Union staff, Uliving and University staff. The group would meet once every academic term with a remit to monitor and assist in any review of the effectiveness of the OMP. It would act as an ongoing forum for the discussion and reasonable resolution of issues and concerns within the local community and to work to maintain a unified community.
- 4.47** The Shuttle Bus provision has been extended to cover Friday and Saturday nights in addition to the main student event nights which are currently Mondays and Wednesdays. The 24 seater bus would make round trips to and from the student village and town centre venue approximately every 30 minutes between 10.30pm and 4.00am. The 24 seater should be sufficient to meet demand but there would be flexibility to provide a larger capacity bus or additional bus if demand is greater than expected. The Shuttle Bus would drop students off behind the reception building thus minimising noise and disturbance. The service would be managed and owned by the University and operational during term time only.
- 4.48** The Ssh volunteer patrol scheme would be launched from the beginning and is modelled on the existing volunteer schemes (StreetWatch and SuperStars Extra) currently operating in the St Paul's area. It would be aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour linked to students and its concept and proposed arrangements are supported by the Gloucestershire Constabulary (under the Partnership Agreement between the Police and University).
- 4.49** It would involve a team of approximately 36 volunteers with 8-10 students, working in pairs, patrolling each night that the scheme operates. The patrols would run on the current busy student nights (Monday and Wednesday) and each night of the annual Fresher's Week and any ad-hoc events throughout the year if appropriate. The patrolling pairs would walk set routes between the campus and town centre, the routes and numbers of volunteers involved reviewed on a regular basis. They would intervene when necessary to ensure noise levels are kept down, encourage use of the Shuttle Bus and support students wherever necessary in returning to campus. Whilst on patrol the volunteers would be in communication with and supported by on-site security staff and the police. The scheme would be reviewed on an annual basis and its effectiveness monitored

through the Community Liaison Group. The Ssh patrol scheme would be run and managed by the University.

- 4.50** Residents have continued to raise concern about street parking and the use of the Reception building for music and late night events. The student 'no car policy' is discussed in some detail in the previous Officer report. All students living in University managed accommodation, under the terms of their tenancy agreement, are not permitted to bring cars or motorcycles to Cheltenham and Gloucester, with the exception of blue badge holders and PGCE postgraduate students issued with parking permits. The University is committed to respond to community concerns where it is known that a car linked to a student living in halls is parked on neighbouring streets and to take appropriate disciplinary action.
- 4.51** There would be a limited number of permits available for anyone visiting students after office hours and at the weekends and these would need to be applied for in advance; this facility monitored carefully. During the day there would be restricted visitor parking as detailed in the OMP and submitted drawings but it is not intended that visiting friends of students would be permitted to use the allocated visitor spaces during the day.
- 4.52** The proposed student refectory and bar is located on the upper floors of the new Reception building with all windows subject to the same restricted opening mechanism (100mm) and acoustic glazing as the proposed residential blocks. The bar and facilities would be for the use of Pittville campus students (and their guests) only and would not be ticketed events or used for University wide events or by outside organisations. The venue would hold small scale local events only (student bands, election hustings and televised sporting events for example) and the number of events limited throughout the year. In terms of capacity, the numbers of students attending these events would be governed by the licence issued by the Council.
- 4.53** In addition, the Environmental Health officer has suggested a number of conditions relating to noise emission from the site, plant and extraction equipment, ventilation and acoustic performance in addition to restrictions on the timings of deliveries and use of the MUGA.
- 4.54** Summary
- 4.55** The OMP has undergone a number of revisions informed by and in response to the discussions and requests for further information made at the Residents Liaison Group meetings. Although a view not shared by all resident representatives of the Liaison Group, officers consider that this document has improved in its relevance, clarity and content and should provide a more robust monitoring device for the future management of this site as a student village.
- 4.56** The key provisions of the OMP in terms of the off-site management of student behaviour would be subject to a s106 Agreement to ensure their establishment, maintenance and effectiveness in the long-term. The Shuttle Bus, Ssh volunteer patrol scheme and Community Liaison Group would run for the duration of the management of the site by Uliving and any successor to that role or land owner, unless any variations to those provisions are agreed between the Council, Uliving and University.
- 4.57** In light of the above and after careful consideration of all amenity issues, the proposals adhere to the objectives of Policy CP4 of the Local Plan. Consideration of student numbers and the management of student behaviour are discussed in more detail in the concluding section of the report.

4.58 Access and highway issues

- 4.59** Highway considerations remain largely unchanged since January. The previous suggested reasons for refusal included transport issues with further detail and consideration required in respect of postgraduate student numbers, car and cycle parking, cycle storage and mitigation measures, Shuttle bus provision, Travel Plan(s) and costings for required highway improvements and mitigation works.
- 4.60** Although there had been some progress in drafting, no legal agreement had been completed in terms of contributions towards highway improvements, mitigation works and infrastructure. These shortcomings were largely a result of the time constraints involved at the time of the January Planning Committee meeting rather than being in principle objections to the proposed development.
- 4.61** The revised scheme provides further information in respect of postgraduate student numbers and their on-site parking requirements. Of the estimated 50 PGCE students on work placements 15 would be issued an on-site parking permit (on a car sharing basis). The revised Travel Plan and legal agreement would control future postgraduate parking.
- 4.62** An improved access with a shared space philosophy is now proposed, which the Highways Officer considers gives the arrival area and main entrance to the site a much safer focus.
- 4.63** The Shuttle Bus arrangements and details are considered acceptable from a highway safety and sustainable transport perspective and both the revised Travel Plan, highways and planning legal agreements would ensure its provision.
- 4.64** The level of on-site car parking (122 spaces) has not changed since January and is a reduction from the 160 when the site was used as a teaching facility. The revised application proposes an increase in cycle spaces to 234. The submitted details indicate areas where additional cycle storage could be provided if future demand exceeds supply. Cycle parking would also be monitored through the revised Travel Plan and legal agreement. The revised Travel Plan now includes sections for a Student Travel Plan and a Staff Travel Plan and will be secured by a s106 Agreement.
- 4.65** The Highways Officer also comments on finger posts and monolith signage, annual monitoring and travel plan targets, preferred cycle and walking routes and associated highways improvements to be delivered via contributions secured via the s106 Agreement.
- 4.66** In conclusion, the Highway Authority recommends no highway objection to the proposed development subject to a number of suggested planning conditions and a signed s106 Agreement. The legal agreement is well advanced with only very minor details to be agreed and may be signed prior to the July Committee meeting. Members will be updated accordingly at Committee.

4.67 Other considerations

4.68 Utilities

- 4.69** The revised Utilities and Energy reports received in January resolved some of the queries from local residents regarding levels of water usage and impact upon existing/future public services and utilities infrastructure. Although not strictly a planning matter, these revised reports were still largely restricted to an assessment of the energy/service requirements of the retained buildings on site rather than an analysis of future demands and impact upon existing services. Subsequent to these queries, an additional survey has been undertaken and revised reports have been submitted which conclude that the proposed development should have no adverse impact upon utilities within the vicinity of the site. This matter has also been discussed and contact made with some of the Utilities companies by members of the Residents Liaison Group.

4.70 Trees and Landscaping

- 4.71** In comparison with the previous scheme, there are few differences in relation to trees and proposed landscaping.
- 4.72** There is a loss of low amenity trees on site and these are mitigated by a suitable landscape planning proposal. However, the Trees Officer suggests conditions relating to a detailed landscaping plan, tree protection and arboricultural monitoring.
- 4.73** The Council's Landscape Architect suggests the reinstatement of a fence securing the rear lawn of TH4 and the relocation of a bike store behind blocks C3. Guidance is also offered in respect of planting trees in long grass. Full details of proposed SuDS and a long term maintenance plan would be secured via planning conditions.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Planning Balance

- 5.2** It is disappointing that there has been no concession on the part of the University to reduce student numbers proposed at Pittville, and this matter has remained foremost on minds as the scheme has progressed over the last six months, particularly in relation to the management of student behaviour. This 'no change' to student numbers issue also stood alongside the deliberations of the Resident's Liaison Group and local residents have made representations on this point.
- 5.3** The University's justification for the numbers of bedrooms proposed is unchanged and appears to be two-fold. Firstly, the ability to guarantee all (or most) first year students a place in University managed accommodation and therefore being able to compete within the market. The University has identified a current shortfall of 482 beds (2014/15) which, with a projected increase in student numbers, is anticipated to increase to 1153 by 2017/18. Secondly, the transfer of management of existing and proposed university owned student accommodation to Uliving on a leasehold arrangement would ensure both quality maintenance and management and thus release capital from current maintenance regimes to invest in teaching accommodation and facilities elsewhere. Coupled with this, the University would also receive a substantial capital receipt from Uliving which would be used to invest further across the University in teaching accommodation primarily for subject areas that have the potential to expand. Similarly, the proposed relocation of existing University staff to Pittville would release office space at Park Campus allowing expansion of the University's Computer Science Department.
- 5.4** The importance of the proposed scheme to the University in terms of its long term vitality and viability and consequently, the economic benefits to Cheltenham are recognised. To that effect, all previous reports, written statements and economic arguments submitted in support of the application which outline the risk to the University should planning permission not be granted are understood and are a material consideration. However, the value of the proposal to the current and future economy of the town must be weighed alongside any harm to amenity that an increase in student numbers of students living on the Pittville campus would cause to the local community and any harm caused to the character of the area through inappropriate design.
- 5.5** As stated previously, the principle of the redevelopment of this site to create a student village is acceptable and not in dispute. Equally, the provision of a large number of students in excess of the current student population at Pittville is not out of the question. This was a vibrant and active site when in full use as a teaching facility and it is expected that a new student village would generate similar levels of activity; although it is not wholly appropriate to draw direct comparisons with the site's last use since the nature of the use was different and largely restricted to day time activity and movement.

- 5.6** With the above in mind, officers fully acknowledge and understand the real concerns that local residents have in respect of the size of development proposed, student behaviour and noise and disturbance. Officers have not underestimated the strength of resident's feelings regarding these matters.
- 5.7** There is no doubt that a student village of the size proposed and an influx of 577 additional students to Pittville would alter the character of the area with the potential for an increase in noise and disturbance. However, this needs to be carefully balanced against the existing/last use of the site as a large teaching facility with an element of residential use which, in itself, contrasts with the predominantly residential character of the area. Officers are not suggesting that there would be no noise and disturbance associated with a large number of additional students on this site and believe that it would be impossible to eliminate disturbances, regardless of the number of students. Indeed, there are problems currently experienced by the 214 existing students at Pittville with 24 complaints lodged with the University during the last year (up until March 2015).
- 5.8** The difficulty in assessing whether 791 students accommodated at the Pittville campus is acceptable from an amenity perspective is that there is no definitive number deemed acceptable in terms of the management of a site and student behaviour, either in planning policy/guidance or case law. Therefore it becomes a matter of professional judgement, with regard to the merits of the proposal and any other material considerations.
- 5.9** Officers also note the difficulties that have arisen in identifying other student residential schemes set within a similar context but point to the need to be cautious in drawing direct comparisons from sites elsewhere in the Country or focus too heavily on an apparent lack of similar sites within a residential area; since this matter has not been researched fully.
- 5.10** There has been much criticism of the University and Uliving by local residents and the Residents Liaison Group in respect of their alleged lack of experience in managing a residential scheme this large within a residential area. Officers consider this a little unfair given that Uliving/Derwent have been managing 4,000 bed spaces across the UK since 2009 in both on and off-site accommodation and the University has many years of experience in accommodating and managing students in their existing halls of residence. The University's Student Support Services team would be relocating to Pittville and therefore enhancing the management of student misconduct on site.
- 5.11** In January, although there were concerns about the numbers of students proposed, the application had not advanced sufficiently and there was lack of clarity in terms of the measures put forward by the applicants to manage effectively and in the long-term, the 794 students, both on and off-site and at different times of the day. Given the site's location within a residential area and somewhat removed from the town centre and teaching facilities, the success of the scheme is, in part, dependant on the ability to understand and manage student movement and activity in ways that will not unduly compromise the existing levels of amenity enjoyed by neighbouring residents.
- 5.12** Pedestrian and cycle audits and an assessment of the numbers of students leaving the site and travelling to other campuses during peak traffic flows was carried out in relation to the previous scheme. This work concluded that 27% of lectures commence at 9.15 and therefore not all trips would be concentrated at the am peak times and would be staggered throughout the day and week. Although the estimated number (214) exceeds the number of students currently leaving the site during the am peak, historically the site would have attracted around 600 students and 200 staff daily and as a busy teaching facility, arguably more vehicular and pedestrian activity during the day.
- 5.13** In light of the above, the management of students and the anticipated levels of noise and activity during the day are generally considered to be acceptable; it is the evening and night time activity that requires more careful consideration.

5.14 In consultation with officers and the Residents Liaison Group, the OMP has been extensively and rigorously reviewed and the schemes identified by the University to manage student behaviour are no longer based on assumptions. There are clearer guidelines with regards their establishment, organisation and delivery. With reference to the previous suggested reasons for refusal, the strategies proposed are now sufficiently advanced in terms of providing evidence and assurance of their long-term delivery, with mitigation measures in place where appropriate. To that effect, the grant of planning permission would be subject to a s106 Agreement to ensure the provision of a Community Liaison Group, Shuttle Bus and Ssh volunteer patrol scheme.

5.15 In addition, underlying the delivery of the OMP is a rigorous management performance framework. All management services delivered by Uliving would be subject to measurement against detailed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) set by the University. The Community Liaison Group would also play a vital role in monitoring the OMP which in turn could feedback to any review of SLAs. As stated in the OMP:-

“The Community Liaison Group will play a supportive role in aiding the University to ensure that the service levels agreed will be upheld. Group members will be expected to feedback on general issues, most likely related to the security of the site, car parking, student pastoral care & conduct, and the complaints procedure/monitoring. In line with existing liaison groups facilitated by the University linked to their campuses, the Community Liaison Group will regularly receive a report from the University on the number of complaints received and the associated actions that have been taken.”

5.16 There would also be other levels of control, over and above University sanctions, in terms of responding to and resolving any amenity and site management issues; the suggested planning conditions relating to noise, Environmental Health monitoring and legislation, planning enforcement procedures, Police involvement and local resident complaints.

5.17 Recommendation

5.18 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF requires that “*at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking....For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay Where the development plan is absent or silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.*”

5.19 Whilst there are no specific local plan policies relating to student accommodation (therefore silent), the policy guidance set out in the NPPF is broadly in conformity with the housing policy objectives of the Local Plan which seek to encourage student accommodation and a range of accommodation types. In this case, the presumption should therefore be in favour of development unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

5.20 Although officers have continued reservations about the numbers of students proposed and their management, the evidence submitted, notably the revisions to the OMP and s106 provisions, provides a greater level of comfort in respect of how the site would be managed in the long-term.

5.21 In terms of the quality and appearance of architectural design, the scheme lacks imagination and interest but it does offer simplification in elevation treatment, materials and colour palette across the site and as such the scheme has fluidity and is more coherent and refined than the previous scheme. Although there continues to be some criticism, there is no fundamental objection from any statutory consultee or amenity group

in respect of design. As such, officers recognise the obvious improvements to the scheme in terms of the simplified and consistent approach to design taken by the new architects; the scheme's success largely reliant on the quality of materials, landscaping and the detail of its design.

- 5.22** There are clearly the economic benefits of the scheme to Cheltenham and the wider region to consider and on balance, the social and environmental impacts of the proposed development are acceptable; the more efficient redevelopment of a brownfield site, employment opportunities and enhancement of the University's residential offer to prospective students and competitiveness within the market. Any harm identified does not, in officer opinion, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposals.
- 5.23** On balance, the recommendation is to permit subject to the applicant entering into legal agreements to secure the provisions relating to the highway and amenity issues outlined in this report.
- 5.24** A full list of suggested conditions will follow as an update.