

APPLICATION NO: 20/00552/FUL	OFFICER: Miss Michelle Payne
DATE REGISTERED: 27th March 2020	DATE OF EXPIRY : 26th June 2020
WARD: Lansdown	PARISH:
APPLICANT:	Workshop Cheltenham Limited
LOCATION:	Car Park, Chester Walk, Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Proposed Mixed Use Innovation Hub for the town centre (revised scheme following grant of planning permission ref. 19/00204/FUL)

REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	2
Number of objections	1
Number of representations	1
Number of supporting	0

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Comments: 7th April 2020

I would like to begin by expressing my strong objection to the deadline for comments on this revised application and feel that this period should be extended in light of the current situation with Covid-19. Many of the buildings affected are closed and their service users are unable to leave their homes.

A lot of local people rely on the library to access the internet or view printed planning documents, so they will be unable to access the support they require during lockdown to have their say.

Everyone has a right to access these proposals before decisions are made so I would urge you to consider extending the deadline for comments until after lockdown, to ensure appropriate scrutiny from the people this proposal will affect the most.

As I have previously commented, whilst I would welcome many aspects of the proposed Innovation Hub I strongly object to the use of the proposed site and feel that there are other more suitable locations available in central Cheltenham.

The development would, I feel, potentially cause far more problems than it would solve if the proposed site is used. In addition, the success of the Innovation Hub could suffer due to complications associated with the location.

The site cannot be seen from the High Street or from Clarence Street. A major concern for many new businesses is that they are visually prominent and easily found. This site offers them nothing in this regard.

The revised plans are for a much larger building. There is an increase of almost 1,700 sq ft/over 155 sq mtrs - a huge difference. (I also wonder why the measurement is in square feet in the original application, whilst the revised version is in square metres, making it difficult to work out just how large the increase is).

It is almost two metres taller than the original plan. The rooftop garden has gone, replaced with a much larger 2nd floor of office-type rooms. The original plan would have affected the light source for the lower floor of the adjacent library building, but this new design will likely affect the light levels on all three floors. One would also assume that, with a much larger internal space there will also be a proportionately greater number of people staffing/visiting the building.

I have previously stated my concerns regarding traffic, parking and deliveries in the proposed area, and the increase in size of the building has heightened my concerns.

There seems no consideration for the volume of both staff and visitors seeking to park close to the facility. Cycles or public transport are not always suitable means of transport for many people. The Euro car park to the rear of the site is always packed and other public car parks are some distance away. Lack of adequate parking could well put off the very businesses and visitors that the Hub is looking to promote and provide for.

Deliveries are a potential nightmare, as there is inadequate room for manoeuvre either within the site or on Chester Walk for large vehicles to turn. If they end up reversing either in or out, vulnerable pedestrians and other vehicles are at increased risk. There are already many problems with traffic and parking in the area, often causing hazardous conditions.

Currently in the area are:

- The building adjacent to the rear entrance of the proposed site, housing The Children's Library, The Local Studies Library and Cheltenham Drop-in (a centre for disabled and vulnerable people). These are visited by pedestrians, including many children, elderly and disabled users, using the access door on Chester Walk. The Children's Library often have various events with large numbers of children attending on foot, including Baby Bounce and Rhyme sessions and School Visits comprising a whole class at a time. The Drop-In Centre has many visitors in wheelchairs or with walking aids, and some arrive by taxi, needing to be dropped off at the door.
- The Wilson Museum and Art Gallery, with Tourist Information Centre. This building has a public entrance on Clarence Street and another on Chester Walk. Both entrances have many pedestrian users, and quite often parents with children will walk between the Chester Walk entrance and the Children's Library. Deliveries are made to the Chester Walk side, and these are often by large vehicles needed for the change-over of exhibits.
- The Cheltenham Main Library, which has daily deliveries to the rear entrance on Chester Walk, opposite to the entrance to the proposed site. This door is also used for disabled access and for staff moving from one library building to the other.
- Shopmobility is at the entrance to Chester Walk on the corner of St George's Place. (The actual entrance is on Chester Walk.) Disabled customers hire powered scooters

or wheelchairs from here in order to access shopping in Cheltenham town centre, usually arriving by taxi or car.

- GL50 restaurant, which also has deliveries via Chester Walk.

The above illustrates the level of traffic and pedestrian use at the present time. There are also refuse and recycling vehicles collecting from the above via Chester Walk.

Some of the above already have their large refuse and recycling bins in the area where the proposed Hub is planning to site theirs. The displaced bins will obviously have to be relocated, and I would not be surprised if this would add to the current congestion of this small access road.

Others have suggested Using St James' Car Park as an alternative site, and this would make great sense: it is more visible and accessible to the public, there would still be available parking for both businesses and the public, and any delivery vehicles would not encounter the restrictions of the current proposed site. All this would help towards the success of the proposed venture, and the ensuing expansion of business and employment in the town centre.

Please reconsider this revised proposal, and in particular the closing date for comments. I am fortunate enough to be able to view and comment on these revised plans at this time, but many are not. I am sure it was an oversight and you will (now it has been reasonably pointed out) take the opportunity to address my concerns and ensure no one is unfairly disadvantaged.

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Comments: 15th April 2020

Whilst I support the building of offices that will help Cheltenham, I am Tower Captain of the bell ringers at Cheltenham Minster. We ring the bells regularly on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings and occasionally on Saturdays and very occasionally during the week. Although we installed sound control when the new bells arrived in 2017, you may wish to let all occupiers know about the possible noise. This would avoid any subsequent complaints arising.