

Office

You may think it a somewhat unusual position for me today to be speaking in support of a contemporary design in the heart of the World Heritage Site. But in this case the right thing to do. For here is a design that fits in. It is not soviet style blocks, not a glass palace, not clad in exotic materials. It is a modest clean and functional design that respects the form of Bath yet with some contemporary characteristics. The proportions are right and the materials appropriate. We would still like to see more of a visual break between the office and hotel section but this would be more of a request than a demand.

Here we have a design that could form a Bath model for contemporary design solution in sensitive areas. We believe it enhances the Conservation Area and would sit harmoniously within the World Heritage Site.

Hotel

Unlike the office application this is a more difficult choice of position, because although this is more the type of design expected to be seen in Bath there are reservations. However it is felt the design has enough merit to be supported in an effort to see progress made on the site. I feel it is important to tell you this because our comments appear to have been reported to you as one of objection. The ideal solution here would be to realign the road and recreate the lost Green Park terrace but this is not on the table today. The issue today is simply, is this design an improvement over those previously refused? We believe that it is, although there is room for further improvement, and this view is supported by English Heritage and slightly more cautiously by others. Like the Georgian Group, we think that the shop front style ground floor is not the correct solution, and there are questions to be asked over sustainability, and the use of cladding panels. But overall in terms of height, scale, mass and quality of detail the design largely succeeds. As with the office application, we believe it will enhance the Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site.

Given the effort put in to the design it would be something of a shame if concerns about issues other than the design become a stumbling block. We appreciate others have strong views about the proposed use, but the Local Plan does not rule out a hotel and we feel that the prime consideration here should be, is this a worthy design for this location and we would say on balance it is. Your officers recommendation is to delegate to permit and we recommend that this is supported. If during the subsequent discussion some improvement to the ground floor could be agreed we would be delighted, but even if that is not achieved, it is hoped progress can be made today and that progress rather than more stagnation on this site is the result. We would like to see the application permitted.