

# PLANNING APPLICATIONS GROUP (PAG)

## SPRING & SUMMER 2014 – John Payne reports

*Over the course of the Spring and Summer the Bristol Civic Society's Planning Applications Group (PAG) has campaigned against excessive increases in residential density, threats to listed buildings and intrusive advertising. Our comments are submitted every three weeks to Bristol City Council's planning officers who refer to them in their reports recommending permission or refusal of development. PAG also makes representations to planning committee meetings and planning appeal inquiries when it is appropriate. The cases set out below give a flavour of some of the recent campaigns.*

### BUILT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

#### 47 Wellington Hill West

It has been particularly rewarding to work with local residents and ward Councillors to campaign against the conversion of an inter-war terraced house in this part of Henleaze into a House in Multiple Occupation resulting in what was, in the Society's opinion, a hugely over-intensive use of the site which also would have resulted in over-looking of neighbours' properties and harm to their quality of life. PAG has appeared with other parties twice at Planning Committee with success to persuade councillors to overturn recommendations for permission for the development. Twice the applicant has appealed and PAG has re-iterated its concerns to the subsequent inquiries but the inspector, in both cases, dismissed the appeals.

#### 10 Portland Square

An application for the construction of a residential extension in the rear garden of this property has been made plus converting the offices in the main building to five flats. PAG had no objection in principle to the change of use but did object to this application. The design of the extension, in terms of its appearance and scale, would be harmful to this grade I-listed building and to its setting. If approved, the development would use the site over-intensively resulting in poor provision of amenity space. Both the appearance of the extension and the intensity of use of the overall development would harm the character of the Conservation Area in PAG's view. PAG was also concerned that there could be alterations to the Portland Square façade of this fine building.

#### 2 – 16 Clifton Down Road

Through PAG, the Society has long been making representations on this site bounded by Boyce's Avenue, King's Road and Clifton Down Road. PAG was invited to a pre-application meeting for the latest proposals in June and our comments are summarised below. The scale of the design for a mixed residential and retail development seemed broadly consistent with surrounding buildings. We felt, however, that the design of the building, particularly at first and second floor levels should strongly reflect the character of the Conservation Area. The introduction of active frontages surrounding the building was welcomed but we were concerned that controls on the size of commercial vehicles serving the shops could be ignored. One of the Society's principle concerns relating to this site is that the open space on the Clifton Downs Road frontage should be retained and improved. It is an important part of the street scene providing relief to the built up street frontages. We noted that the existing birch trees were not shown on the initial proposals and requested that they be retained or, if that were not possible, replaced by suitable semi-mature trees. A planning application is awaited.

#### Repair of Gatehouse at Ashton Park Secondary School

PAG strongly supported the commendable repair and restoration work proposed for this grade II-listed building.

### ADVERTISING AND BRANDING PROPOSALS

#### Hillhouse and Artichoke Pub Site, Lewins Mead

There was a particularly outrageous proposal for internally illuminated hotel and burger café signage and branding for the proposed building on this site. It is a prominent and sensitive site close to the open space between St James Church and Lewins Mead/Haymarket. The array included a 1.7m wide hotel sign extending from 13m to 20m above pavement level, unnecessarily large and high for the purposes of finding a hotel. Perhaps the final straw was an internally illuminated cow facing Lewins Mead. PAG objected strongly to the proposals because of the harmful impact they would have, particularly on the peace and tranquillity of the open space. The latest position is that the application has been withdrawn.

#### Colston Tower

A proposal for a large LED screen advertisement, 12m by 3.6m was submitted for display on Colston Tower 6.5 m above the pavement. PAG has successfully campaigned against two other screens of this type in central Bristol and was delighted that the council refused this proposal. An appeal has been lodged and we hope that the Inspector will continue to support the council's worthy stand against these highly intrusive, brightly shining monstrosities.

#### 86 Bedminster Parade

PAG has recently objected to proposed large-scale advertising and branding on this fine grade II-listed building. We felt the building was of such quality that it announced itself and that the occupying bank could use much more subtle signage to advertise its presence. The proposal would harm both the appearance of the Listed Building and the character of the Conservation Area. At the time of writing a decision had yet to be made.

Our meetings are informal and relaxed and normally followed by a chat in a nearby hostelry. We are always in need of new members to share this work. If you would like to come along to a meeting please contact John Payne.

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