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an independent force for a better Bristol

6th May 2017**The proposal**

Refurbish Abbey House. Demolish the Abbey House double garage to construct a catering kiosk. Demolish the gym block to construct a new link-building and gym. Build 2 new classrooms above the Trinity Building.

Introduction

The Society is grateful to Skanska and to their architects Childs Sulzman for the invitation to discuss the scheme on the 26th April. Public consultation is effective when it occurs early enough in the planning process to affect the final form of development. The Society supports the scheme whose success will depend upon the quality of both the design and the materials used. At this stage, the Society would like reassurance that the part of the Library in which the School is interested would not affect access to the parts of the Library used by the public.

Demolition

The Society agrees that the buildings to be demolished are without architectural merit.

Height and mass

This comment is subject to the outcome of any more extensive views analysis that the Council may require. Currently, it would appear the both the replacement Gym Block and the roof extension to the Trinity Block will further obstruct the view of the choir and nave of the Cathedral from some viewpoints. The Society's view is that the development would cause harm but less than substantial harm to the Cathedral's setting. The architectural and public realm gains from the scheme and the and increase in pupil capacity would outweigh the negative impact of the reduced view of the Cathedral.

Design**(i) The Gym Building replacement**

The Society supports the proposed design for the link building in modern materials, to be agreed with the Council. There are several options for the south elevation of the Gym replacement. The Society supports a design that responds to the Pallister Martin Block. Zinc could be a suitable material for the upper parts of this elevation; it combines unaggressively with traditional building materials.

(ii) The Trinity Block extension

The Society supports the proposal to add a new floor in a Mansard design. Seamed metal could be a suitable surface material.

The architects are fully aware of the need to consider the design as well as the colours of the material that will face the modern extensions whether zinc or another material. Although the Pallister Martin building is the reference point a simple replication of its form and materials could lead to disappointment. Good architecture in a historic setting needs to take reference from local vernacular but update and interpret it to create a coherent overall design; to integrate the old with the new. The Society looks forward to seeing the options once they are explored

(iii) The service kiosk

The replacement of the garage will be a planning gain. The Society has no preference whether the kiosk is the proposed informal structure or built from permanent materials, if that is the Council preference.

This busy site will need careful management of food waste and litter. How will the proposed 'tensile cover' over the seating areas in the garden look from the public realm after it has weathered?

The public realm

The Society supported the partnership of the School, the Cathedral and the Council to improve the public realm to the west of the Cathedral through the School's premises to Anchor Road. The development offers a further opportunity and resource to unify and enhance that space.

Transport

This planning application provides the Council with the leverage to insist that the School provides a comprehensive transport scheme to reduce parental traffic at the beginning and end of the school day. The Society supports the Council's policy to reduce the number of private cars in the city centre, which is the only way to avoid and reduce increasing congestion and worsening air quality.