

New Planning Application for North Car Park, University of Bath

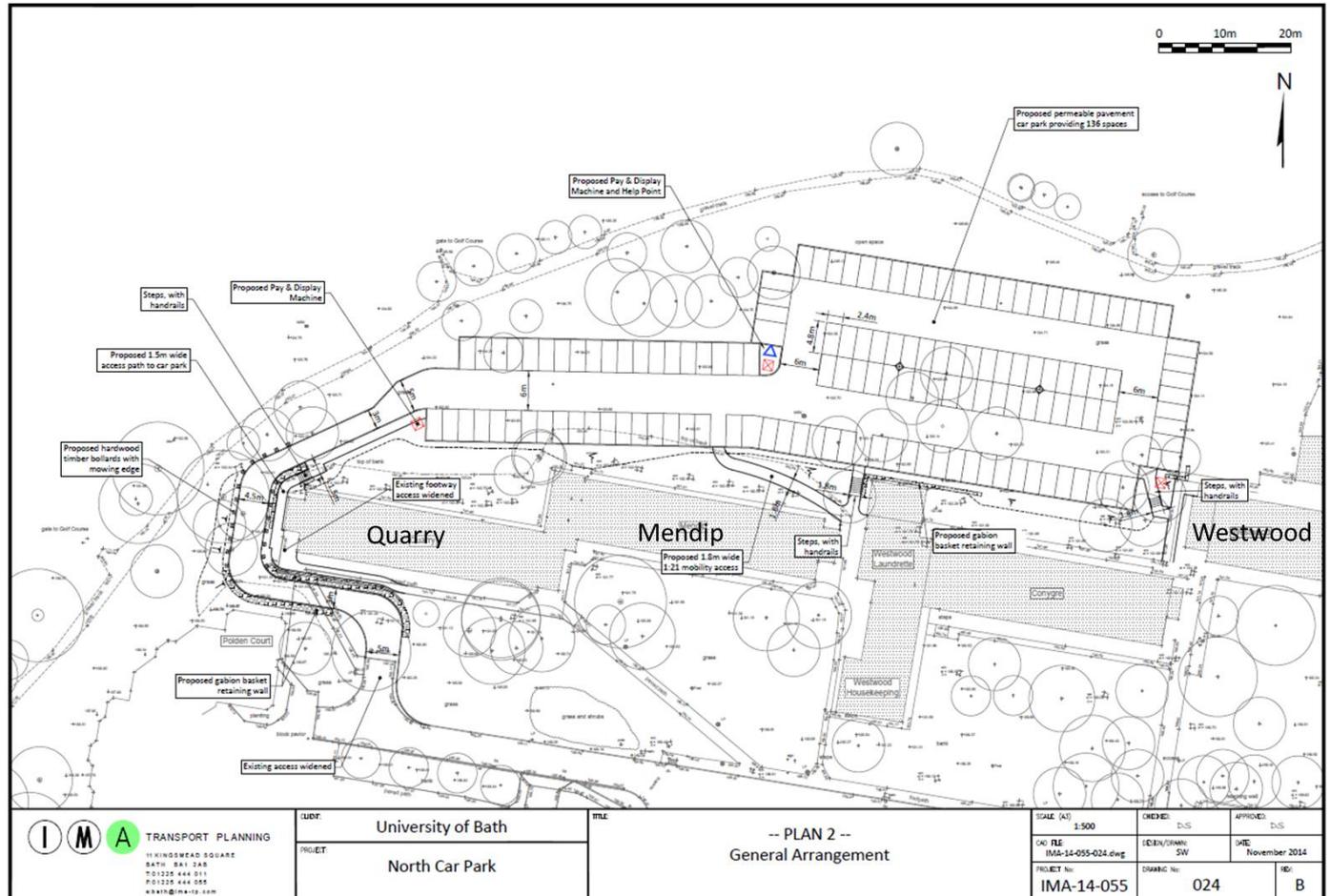
Application 14/05793/FUL

The University has submitted a revised proposal to build a new North Car Park. Due to the level of opposition, the University was forced to withdraw their first application (14/02715/FUL) before it was rejected; however they have now modified the proposal slightly and quietly resubmitted it. The first proposal received over 150 objection letters. The Council's Landscape team objected to the loss of green space (used by members of the community, walkers, children from the adjacent nursery and students) and English Heritage felt very strongly that the grassy run up to Bathampton fort Scheduled Ancient Monument needed to be retained. Objections were also received from the National Trust and the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

The new car park is smaller and the access road no longer runs alongside the bridleway (see below) but there is still strong opposition to building a new car park on a green belt site that is widely used by walkers, university staff, children from the adjacent nursery and students. If a large number of objections are again registered it will send a strong message to the Council that this time the proposal should be rejected outright. So if you object to a car park on this site please register your objections at the website below. We can win this if enough people are interested!

If you want to object please register your comments online by the 11th February. Go to the BANES planning portal and enter the proposal number 14/05793/FUL

<http://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/projects/bathnes/developmentcontrol/>



Some of the reasons for objecting are:

Adverse impact on the heritage value of the site: The application site is next to the Bathampton Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), a “heritage asset of the highest significance”. Consequently, “great weight” should be given to the preservation of the SAM and its setting. In response to the first application, English Heritage objected to the proposed car park in principle on the basis that it would cause irreparable harm to the small amount of undeveloped land between the University buildings and the SAM and that it should be excluded from any future development to preserve the setting of the SAM unless there is “clear and convincing justification”. There is no such justification in this case. The Inspector of Ancient Monuments identified the importance of this part of the setting of the SAM and the Council has a responsibility to preserve it for future generations. The setting of the SAM is of great historical value and there should be no disturbance to it at all, especially when there are viable alternatives.

Adverse impact on the environmental/ecological value of the site: The Phase 1 Habitats survey carried out by Ecosulis commissioned by the University states that the habitats on site provide suitable opportunities for badgers, bats, nesting birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians in combination with adjacent habitats. It goes on to state (p6) that the site is a “confirmed commuting route” for horseshoe bats. Part of the Bath and Bradford on Avon bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is just 700m away from the site and so it is reasonable to infer that any development in this currently undeveloped location will cause a risk to the welfare of the bats. Approval of these plans would therefore also be contrary to the Council’s Core Strategy, Core Principles CP6 (Environmental Quality) for the following reasons: “The quality, extent and robustness of protected sites and valued habitats will be enhanced, and networks of valued habitat will be restored or created, by measures which: (a) Improve the quality and/or increase the size of current sites and valued habitat. (b) Enhance connections between, or join up, sites and valued habitats. (c) Create new sites and valued habitats. (d) Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment.

Loss of amenity to members of the community, students and the children at Westwood Nursery: The council’s landscape officer objected to the first proposal as it would have ‘significant impacts on green infrastructure and landscape setting’ and labelled the area a ‘valuable piece of open space’. These conclusions should remain the same for the new car park. In addition the proposed car park is to be located adjacent to a well-used Public Bridleway that is of historical significance – it marks ‘the boundary between the historic parishes of Bathampton and Monkton Combe, existing before 1850. The hedgerow forms part of Bathampton Camp, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and Bathampton Down Iron Age and Romano-British field systems’ (Ecosulis Ecology report – appended to the previous planning application for a car park in this area). The application proposes that the car park will be bordered the Bridleway and hedgerows. As indicated in the Architect’s plans – ‘Design and Access Statement’ – ‘The proposed car park clearly involves major visual changes to many of the views analysed within the campus.’

What to do:

1. Link to the planning portal:

<http://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/projects/bathnes/developmentcontrol/>

2. The planning application reference is [14/05793/FUL](#)

3. Once you click to get through to the main planning application page, click on the link at the top of the page saying: Planning Applications (Reference: [14/05793/FUL](#)) Comments are invited on this application, please click here. You then have space to type in your objection (2000 word in total) and then it is submitted and added to the planning application a day or so later.