

<b>Planning application no.</b>	19/00931/FUL, 19/00933/LBC and 19/00934/LBC	
<b>Site</b>	Site of the former Faces Nightclub and land and buildings adjacent, Old Hall Street, Bilston Street, Garrick Street and St George's Parade, Wolverhampton City Centre	
<b>Proposal</b>	Creation of the City Learning Quarter, including the erection of new teaching accommodation; extensions, alterations and internal configurations to Wolverhampton Central Library (listed building) and Metro One (College), Adult Education Building (listed building), Foyer Building, Alan Garner Building, St George's House, and associated access, parking and landscaping	
<b>Ward</b>	St Peter's;	
<b>Applicant</b>	City of Wolverhampton Council	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Harman Banger Cabinet Member for City Economy	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration	
<b>Originating service</b>	Planning	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Phillip Walker	Senior Planning Officer
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## **1.0 Summary recommendation:**

- 1.1 Grant applications 19/00931/FUL, 19/00933/LBC and 19/00934/LBC subject to conditions.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The New Horizon 2030 Vision for Wolverhampton sets out the ambition to ensure that the City Centre has 'a skills system which responds to the needs of employers' and is integral to the City of Wolverhampton's vision for the continued transformation of the City Centre.

- 2.2 The applicants' aspiration is to concentrate the College onto two main campuses in the City Centre and at Wellington Road in Bilston. This will enable the current campus at Paget Road to be disposed of to provide funding to support the new campus in the City Centre. Paget Road is a 1950's campus in a residential area outside of the City Centre which is not fit for purpose.
- 2.3 The proposal is to provide a new learning campus that links the existing Metro One college building to the existing Adult Education facilities and Central Library to provide expanded learning facilities.
- 2.4 Demolition and site clearance has received planning permission (19/00251/FUL) and is underway. The above ground part of the former Faces Nightclub has now been demolished.
- 2.5 A public consultation event was held in May 2019.
- 2.6 On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 the City of Wolverhampton Council Cabinet approved the delivery of the City Learning Quarter project.

### **3.0 Application site**

- 3.1 This 1.3 ha site is located within the City Centre. The Unitary Development Plan identifies it as within the Old Hall Street Conservation Area, and the City Centre Area Action Plan identifies it as within the St George's and St John's Character Area.
- 3.2 The site is bounded by Bilston Street to the north, St George's Parade to the east and south and Garrick Street to the west. Old Hall Street runs east to west through the middle of the site and includes a public square and a row of London Plane trees. On the northern side of Old Hall Street, on the north-west corner, is cleared land formerly occupied by Faces Nightclub, and adjoining that land is the Metro One College building and the Grade II Listed Old Hall (Adult Education) building. On the north-east corner is a surface level car park and adjacent is St Georges House. On the southern side of Old Hall Street, is the Grade II\* Listed Wolverhampton Central Library, Alan Garner Building, Foyer Buildings, Mount Bethel Church and Accord Housing residential flats. Numbers 3, 5 and 7 St George's Parade have recently been demolished in anticipation of future development.

### **4.0 Application Details**

- 4.1 Three associated applications have been submitted. These are:
- 4.2 19/00933/FUL. This includes
  - New college buildings of up to four storeys on the north east and north west corners of the site
  - Remodelling of the existing Metro One building.
  - Conversion and extension of the existing vacant St Georges old rectory.
  - Remedial works to the Central Library façade.

- Recladding of external façade of rear extension and new rear entrance to the Library.
- Reconfiguration and refurbishment of the internal Library space and refurbished public toilets.
- Internal reconfiguration of the Alan Garner building to accommodate Adult Education facilities including a new link extension with the Central Library.
- A car park (seventeen spaces) with access off St Georges Parade.

4.3 19/00933/LBC. This proposes:

- Remedial works to the Central Library façade.
- New rear entrance to the Library and refurbished public toilets.
- New link with the Central Library.
- Reconfiguration and refurbishment of the internal Library space.

4.4 19/00934/LBC. This proposes:

Alterations and internal configurations to the Adult Education Building (Old Hall Building).

## **5.0 Planning history**

5.1 19/00251/FUL. Demolition and clearance of the Former Cinema (faces Nightclub and Compton Care retail unit) Bilston Street and numbers 3, 5 and 7 St Georges Parade. Granted. 01.04.2019.

## **6.0 Relevant policy documents**

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.2 The Development Plan (UDP)  
Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)  
Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)  
City Centre Area Action Plan

## **7.0 Publicity**

7.1 Two letters of objection have been received. Comments summarised as follows:

- The proposals to link, or alter, the Old Hall Street building with the new Garrick Street building would ruin the architectural merit and historic significance of this building.
- New building on the open space on the south side of Old Hall Street would detract from the well-lit and open aspect of the street.
- The changes to St George's House and the listed Central Library are unacceptable.
- Existing pedestrian routes through to the Metro terminus must be protected.
- Student developments will not add to the allure, reputation or wealth of the City.
- The development would be on the opposite side of the City Centre to the University.
- The proposals would be detrimental to the quiet and unspoiled character of the site.
- The proposals would likely result in other buildings becoming student accommodation, reducing the potential for shops and cafes.
- The proposals would be detrimental to the character and heritage of the City.

## **8.0 Consultees**

- 8.1 Historic England has no objections subject to acceptable details in respect of external materials, sections, large scale architectural details and external material sample panels, to ensure high quality design finishes.
- 8.2 Environmental Health has no objection subject to conditions including construction management plan, contaminated land remediation, plant and machinery, hours of demolition and construction, bin stores, noise and air quality mitigation.
- 8.3 Transportation has no objection subject to conditions including the provision and retention of vehicle parking, reversal of the existing one-way traffic system on Old Hall Street to address existing traffic flow problems (“rat-running”), cycle facilities and an electric vehicle charging point.
- 8.4 Staffordshire County Council Flood Risk Management Service has no objection subject to a condition requiring the implementation of the flood risk assessment.

## **9.0 Legal implications**

- 9.1 The legal implications arising from this report are set out below KR/21102019/A.

## **10.0 Appraisal**

- 10.1 The main issues in this case are:
- The principle of the development proposal
  - Design and impact on heritage assets
  - Access and parking
  - Ecology

### Principle of development

- 10.2 Wolverhampton City Centre Area Action Plan states that proposals which enhance the role of the city centre as a focus for education and learning will be supported. A key proposal is to work with Wolverhampton College to consolidate and improve its existing city centre campus and introduce new facilities. Wolverhampton College has a significant presence in the St George’s and St John’s Character Area providing a variety of educational and vocational training. The proposed development would allow for Wolverhampton College to improve its existing city centre campus and introduce new facilities, thereby enhancing the city centre as a focus for education and learning and is therefore acceptable in principle.

### Design and impact on heritage assets

- 10.3 The application site is within the Old Hall Street Conservation Area and includes the Grade II\* listed Public Library and the Grade II Listed Adult Education building.
- 10.4 The character of the conservation area is largely determined by public buildings erected in the late Victorian period of which the library is the most outstanding. Old Hall Street

forms an internal focus for the area which otherwise is outward looking and degraded by historical demolition.

- 10.5 The new development will enhance and better reveal the significance of the heritage assets affected.
- 10.6 There is no objection to the alterations to the listed library which involve minimal loss of fabric and the enhancement of the interior through the renovation of historic tiles. The place-making emphasis given to Old Hall Street in terms of the layout of proposed new buildings and the improvements to public realm would enhance the conservation area.
- 10.7 The scale and massing of the new build elements respond to the character of the area. The use of glazed panels, textured panels and horizontal banding would provide visual interest to ensure that the new buildings respond appropriately to the setting of the library building and Adult Education building, other heritage assets and the Conservation Area, as required by Section 12 of the NPPF.

#### Access and parking

- 10.8 This is a highly accessible location, with excellent public transport links, acceptable car parking arrangements and there are no objections from Council Transportation Officers.

#### Ecology

- 10.9 An ecological assessment, bat survey and tree survey have been provided and this confirms that there would be no unacceptable harm to protected species or trees.

### **11.0 Conclusion**

- 11.1 The benefits of the proposed development would be in three key areas: education, jobs and regeneration. The proposal would provide a viable and sustainable future for the City of Wolverhampton College, support the development of young people and their education and enhance their employment prospects. It would also provide a major regeneration stimulus in the City Centre. The proposal is in accordance with the development plan.

### **12.0 Detail recommendation**

- 12.1 19/00931/FUL - Grant subject to conditions including:
- Archaeology
  - Contaminated land remediation
  - Drainage
  - Demolition and Construction Method Statement
  - Targeted recruitment and training
  - Levels
  - Tree Protection
  - Landscaping
  - External Materials
  - Large scale architectural details

- Sample panels of the external materials
- Cycle parking
- Bin stores
- Electric vehicle charging point
- External lighting
- Provision and retention of car parking
- Travel Plan
- Details of external glazing for ground floor public facing college building windows
- Noise report; Acoustic glazing and ventilation for teaching rooms
- Noise insulation for all plant and heating equipment
- Cooking odour mitigation
- Hours of construction and demolition
- Any necessary traffic regulation orders and reversal of the existing one-way traffic system on Old Hall Street

12.2 19/00933/LBC and 19/00934/LBC – Grant these applications subject to any necessary conditions including external materials and large-scale architectural details.

