

To whom it may concern:

The University of Bath submitted an application for the proposed North Car Park on 12th June 2014. This has been assigned application number 14/02715/FUL and was formally registered on 30th June 2014. You can access and comment on these plans by going to: <http://goo.gl/VSYDS2> . The period for comment on this planning application closes on 11th August 2014. The planning application relates the construction of two new car parks and a road on the University's campus.

The access road to the car parks will run alongside the Public Bridleway (entrance North Road/Golf Course woods/Quarry Road). This Public Bridleway 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). The application not only proposes that the Bridleway is now to run alongside, a two-way (in places, single carriage) road along the length leading to the car parks, and between the two car parks, but that the proposed car parks themselves are to be built directly alongside the Bridleway and hedgerows. This will impact upon users walking dogs, joggers, cyclists, families with young children and horseriders. Moreover, 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.’ The architects conclude, however, ‘Despite this due to the low sensitivity of these views the impact significance has been rated as not significant on the world heritage setting of Bath.’ Had they undertaken ‘wide scale public consultation’ on these proposals, which by their own admission they have not, they might have also realized that the adverse impact of the views to users of the Bridleway would have been nevertheless considered significant.

In terms of the environmental and archaeological impact of the plans, the University has commissioned a number of independent reports, which have been posted alongside the planning application. The conclusions make for interesting reading. For example, according to the Archaeological report by WA Heritage:

‘the potential archaeological resource within the Site may be considered to be of local to regional importance. The proposed scheme would have a localised, direct adverse impact within the footprint of the developments and their immediate vicinity. Excavations associated with the groundworks could damage/remove deposits which have a potential to contain evidence for archaeological activity.’

According to the Ecology report by Ecosulis, the hedgerow running alongside the Bridleway, has ‘ecological and landscape importance ... under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.’ Moreover, these ‘hedgerows on site are being used by low numbers of lesser horseshoe bats for commuting and foraging.’ Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 from deliberate capture, injury and killing, intentional or reckless disturbance, intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection, and deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. And, ‘Although foraging areas and commuting routes are not legally protected, the effects of development proposals on these are a material consideration ...’. Consequently, they recommend ‘Retention of the ecologically important hedgerows on site, which also act as important wildlife corridors for local wildlife including lesser horseshoe bats and keeping a 5m buffer between hedgerows and development works.’ – not something that is proposed

given that the hedgerow is adjacent to the Bridleway and which is going to be turned into a road and car park.

Finally, it is of general concern that the proposed car parks would also be built on the open and woodland space currently surrounding the University's nursery for 65 children aged 4 and under. Not only is there no reference to the nursery in any of the planning documents, but despite the numerous ecological/archaeological surveys that the University have commissioned, no health or safety assessment has been carried in relation to the impact of the car parks and access road, either during the period of building or in their finished state, on the health, safety and well-being of the children. Parents of the 65 children at the nursery are objecting that the car parks would inhibit the children's current use of the open and woodland area and that they would have an adverse impact on the health, safety and well-being of the children at the nursery.

There appears to have been a complete lack of consultation on these plans and posting of public notices in relation to this planning application has been extremely limited.