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**Statement to Planning Committee 05/05/2021**

**20/00552/FUL**

The Scala Shaftesbury Road Oldfield Park Bath BA2 3LH

Redevelopment of The Scala site including the demolition of existing extensions and new extensions to improve retail store at ground floor level, provide a new community space at first floor levels and 20no apartments across first and second floor. Erection of student accommodation including 96no. student bedrooms and associated ancillary space. Erection of a residential block (C3) including 12no one bedroom apartments (a mix of affordable and market with accessible accommodation). Parking for cars and cycles and associated landscaping.

***Against***

The Trust is supportive in principle of mixed-use development on this site and we welcomed the revisions to the development design.

However, the proposed height and scale of the four-storey central courtyard building remains out of character with the established roofline of the Oldfield Park character area and the setting of the conservation area. The site is visible in mid-range elevated townscape views, and the courtyard building would have an overbearing impact on its two-storey residential context.

Character assets of the area include the homogenised ‘common scale’ and density of the streetscape, in which the Scala building is a landmark feature. The scale and office-like design of the courtyard building would challenge the Scala’s architectural prominence and detract from its landmark character.

We are opposed in principle to the provision of speculative PBSA in a declining market and an area of over 25% HMO concentration and maintain student accommodation should only be considered where delivered in conjunction with an education provider, such as Norland College.

The proposed development, by virtue of height and scale, would fail to reinforce local distinctiveness and would harm the visual amenity value of the townscape, and would result in a built form that would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. We therefore recommend that the application is refused.