

Objection to application: 22/02909/FB**Installation of security fencing and gates at the Marchioness Building – Commercial Road**

Friends of Bathurst Basin wish to object to proposals to construct security fencing on the southern side of Commercial Road, Bristol. We represent 109 local residents who live close to the proposed fencing.

The scheme was part of an agreement between Bristol City Council and the owner of the Marchioness Building (Dr Pratt) when land was acquired by the Council to facilitate the Metrobus route.

The reasons for our objection are:

1. Bristol City Council has installed a standard steel fencing that runs from the Feeder Canal, through the New Cut, inside the Floating Harbour and along the River Avon gorge. It is robust, aesthetically pleasing and serves its purpose well to stop people going onto the river bank or water. High security fencing is not required along the New Cut.
2. The site is located between three conservation areas (City Docks, Redcliffe and Bedminster) and the proposal does nothing to enhance these zones - rather it 'industrialises' them.
3. The current fencing allows free visual range for people looking across the New Cut from either bank. The new fence would significantly impact the visual aesthetics of the location with no benefit to the community or those who pass through.
4. The Marchioness has a Certificate of Lawfulness to allow for continuation of use as a single dwelling house. However the focus of the site is to provide car parking for commuters. In our view there is no need for more protection unless the owner of the Marchioness can confirm that the building is actually being used as a residence.
5. The proposed security fencing would hinder the emergency service accessing the New Cut should this be necessary.
6. The banks of the New Cut are part of the Bristol City Council vision to create biodiversity highways through the urban areas of Bristol. Not only does the proposal involve the destruction of established trees to the east of the access gate, but the site would be significantly impacted by the construction work and would take years to recover.
7. The Council may be obliged by its contract with Dr Pratt to provide security fencing around the Marchioness. But why extend this fencing beyond the new Marchioness access gate to the east? Protection of the perimeter of the Marchioness only requires security fencing from the entrance gate westward alongside both sides of the access roadway to the Marchioness.
8. There is a total lack of trust in this application because on the same site of the proposed fencing and gates, the owner of the Marchioness proposed to develop a replica marine jetty even though there has been no marine traffic for many years. We believe that the real intent was most likely to build a platform for additional car parking space for rental.

That application was rejected by Bristol City Council. FOBB wonders if there will be a second application once the fence is built for a change in land use on the river side.

In these days of frugal local government spending and much maintenance investment required along the New Cut, we propose that these funds be put to better use by maintaining the integrity of the New Cut river banks.

Saturday, 17th September 2022

Richard Finch
Chair of Friends of Bathurst Basin (FOBB)