

Comment on Planning Application related to Montpelier, Vicarage and Temple Buildings (BH2021/00414-5)

The Regency Society strongly supports this application, which would secure the beneficial and sustainable use of buildings whose historical interest as the homes of three of the most important figures in the history of Brighton, Thomas Kemp and Henry and Arthur Wagner, is comparable to their architectural interest.

The proposals are on balance without detriment to the special interest of the historic buildings, while enhancing their settings, and would preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area. The community benefits of the application will only be fully realised once the planned internal alterations to The Temple, which would allow public access for the first time, are approved and implemented.

The objectives of improving the thermal performance and putting the windows and doors of The Temple and the Old Vicarage in sound condition would be met by a conservation-driven approach.

The objectives of the landscape work of providing improved outdoor facilities for the school and improving equal access for all would be met in a way which reduces hard landscaping and increases biodiversity.

The removal of parking from in front of the Temple and pedestrianizing of the gateway on axis with its main entrance is particularly welcome. The loss of young trees to allow the removal of the parking is more than compensated for elsewhere.

The alteration to the pedestrian gate on the north side of Temple Gardens to improve the accessibility of the lower ground floor of The Temple would be beneficial to the special interest of the boundary wall. The necessary loss of a mature tree is more than compensated for in the landscape proposals.

It is regrettable that the proposals do not provide equal access directly to the ground floor of The Temple, even if not at the main entrance, and it is hoped that this can be addressed in the forthcoming proposals for internal alterations.

The School Travel Plan should encourage sustainable travel to ensure that the increased numbers on the site do not increase disruption to the local community. The provision of 101 cycle spaces for staff and pupils, the reduction in the number of parking spaces for staff and, if warranted, additional mini-bus services to parts of the catchment area where public transport is not a viable option are critical to the success of the Plan.

Brighton Girls is a day school, so there should not be increased disruption from school activities at weekends. Any increased disruption at weekends should be from activities which are for the benefit of the local community.

Alasdair Glass 29/3/21