# Bristol City Centre plans transformation of office building into student accommodation



Bristol City Centre is set to witness a transformation as plans have been approved to convert parts of a largely vacant office building into student accommodation. College House, located above a Tesco Express on College Green, will be repurposed to include 57 studio apartments aimed primarily at post-graduate and returning undergraduate students. This decision has generated a variety of responses from local residents, highlighting concerns about housing for families amidst a focus on student accommodation.

The Bristol City Council granted planning permission for the redevelopment on March 19, allowing the upper four floors of College House to be turned into nearly sixty student studios. Each studio will feature specific zones for sleeping, studying, kitchen and dining, and en-suite bathrooms, with sizes ranging from 15 square metres to 20 square metres. Additionally, three of the proposed studios will be accessible.

CharlesBridge, a reader contributing to the commentary section, expressed a positive view of the development, stating it represents "an imaginative reinvention of the disused office." Similarly, Cheddar highlighted the benefits of repurposing unused space rather than opting for demolition, noting that this could help alleviate housing pressures in the broader market. DeepThoughtX suggested that providing purpose-built accommodations for students may ultimately relieve pressure on the general housing market by freeing up private homes for non-students.

However, the proposed development has also faced scrutiny from other residents. Some commenters voiced concerns that the city’s shift towards constructing more student accommodations neglects the needs of families and ordinary working people. Jabbymisschief pointed out that the focus appears disproportionate to the requirements for affordable housing for Bristolians.

Darrow raised an important point regarding the financial aspects of student living arrangements, suggesting that since students are exempt from council tax, it may be reasonable for universities to contribute financially based on enrollment numbers. Other comments reflected similar frustrations, highlighting that the increasing number of student flats may not address the pressing issues related to homelessness and housing shortages in the area.

In a separate development, the Bristol City Council is also considering two planning applications to convert disused public toilets into eateries. One proposal involves refurbishing a currently vacant toilet on North Road which has been derelict for over 25 years. Plans include reinstating a shopfront and introducing a seating area for patrons. The applicants argue that this redevelopment will promote healthy eating options and repair a long-neglected infrastructure.

Another similar application looks at transforming a public toilet on Westbury-on-Trym High Street into a food outlet. This facility has remained closed since the council deemed it unnecessary and closed multiple public toilets across the city in 2018. The plans have been modified to keep the footprint of the building unchanged while enhancing its façade.

Furthermore, a notable application for a large house in multiple occupation (HMO) has emerged on Gloucester Road. The project seeks to expand an existing small HMO into one with 10 bedrooms to accommodate up to 10 residents. This would involve modifications to the structure to include more shared living spaces while retaining the ground floor retail space occupied by Bishopston Tiles.

The Bristol city planners will deliberate on these applications, among others, as part of ongoing efforts to address local development needs for both commercial and residential purposes. The varying opinions expressed by readers indicate a complex response to these developments, signalling an ongoing discussion about the balance of housing strategies within the city.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/about/residences/> - This URL provides information about student accommodations at the University of Bristol, supporting the broader context of student housing developments in Bristol.
* <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/about/residences/houses/> - Details the types of student residences available in Bristol, such as Campus Houses, highlighting the diversity in student accommodation options.
* <https://www.collegehouse.com> - Although not directly related to the specific development of College House in Bristol, this URL offers insights into student housing data analytics, which could support discussions on student accommodation trends.
* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning-and-development> - Bristol City Council's planning department webpage, where decisions like those involving College House would be documented, though the specific URL might not be directly available.
* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-tax> - This link could support discussions about council tax exemptions for students, although specific details on financial contributions from universities may not be readily available.
* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-applications> - This URL provides access to planning applications and decisions by Bristol City Council, which would include applications for developments like converting public toilets into eateries.