# Vacant Clifton office to become 16 student studios amid Bristol housing crunch



Plans for the conversion of a vacant office building on Whiteladies Road in Clifton into purpose-built student accommodation have been submitted, reflecting a growing need for such housing in Bristol. The proposal, put forth by Matterhorn Investments Ltd, seeks full planning permission to transform the existing four-storey office block into 16 self-contained studio flats, a move that underscores the ongoing accommodation pressures faced by students in the city.

The building's location is noted as a key factor in the proposal, with a supporting statement from Rapleys LLP emphasising its exceptional proximity to the University of Bristol's main campus and vital public transport links. This central positioning is crucial as demand for student accommodation swells, particularly in city centre areas where competition for housing is fierce. The developers argue that by providing managed alternatives to shared housing in residential neighbourhoods, such projects can alleviate pressure on family homes.

The site at 6 Whiteladies Road offers a feasible opportunity for redevelopment due to its history as office space, having been unsuccessfully marketed for several months. Commercial agents Burston Cook reported a lack of interest from potential tenants, attributing this to challenges such as the building's multi-level layout and limited accessibility, including the absence of a lift. This trend, reflecting a slowdown in the office-to-residential conversion boom in Bristol, has implications for local property markets, particularly as secondary office values rise and the availability of suitable stock diminishes.

The development plans propose only minor exterior modifications to respect the building's character within the Clifton Conservation Area, which, while not formally listed, is considered a “character building” due to its proximity to several listed properties. Proposed enhancements include the reinstatement of traditional sash windows and the thoughtful integration of refuse and bicycle storage facilities, aiming to modernise the site while preserving its historical aesthetic.

Noise concerns have also been addressed in the planning application, with a Noise Impact Assessment indicating that any slight internal noise level exceedances are minimal and imperceptible. This analytical approach demonstrates an effort to ensure that the accommodation will meet necessary living standards for students.

In a broader context, the development not only addresses housing shortages but is also poised to create local employment opportunities during the construction phase. An Employment and Skills Statement indicated that a condition will be applied requiring the development to provide local job opportunities across various fields, including construction, procurement, and post-construction services.

The confirmation of this student accommodation project could mark a significant step in meeting rising educational and housing demands, as the city grapples with balancing student needs against residential community concerns. If approved, construction is anticipated to commence within the statutory three-year period, with an aim for completion set for 2026.

As Bristol moves forward with its urban development strategies, the success of such initiatives will likely hinge on addressing both the demands of student populations and the preservation of community character amid ongoing housing transformations.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraph 4
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraph 2
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 3
7. Paragraph 6

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/vacant-clifton-office-set-become-10168110> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/6-Whiteladies-Rd-Bristol/33230791/> - This listing details the sale of 6 Whiteladies Road, a four-story office building in Bristol, offering 3,032 square feet of space. The property is not listed, providing potential for residential conversion. It features a large rear courtyard garden, kitchen, shower facilities, and six parking spaces. The building was constructed in 1930 and is currently fitted out as high-quality office accommodation. The listing emphasizes the property's suitability for redevelopment into residential units, highlighting its location and existing amenities.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-62a-planning-application-s62a20240069-20-whiteladies-road-bristol-bs8-2lg> - This official government document outlines a planning application for 20 Whiteladies Road, Bristol, proposing a change of use from offices/clinic (Class E) to an 8-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (sui generis). The application includes an infill extension and external alterations, such as replacing windows at the front and rear. The document provides details on the application process, key dates, and how to make representations, serving as a reference for similar developments in the area.
4. <https://www.bristol247.com/opinion/your-say/end-in-sight-for-bristols-office-residential-conversion-boom/> - This article discusses the slowdown of Bristol's office-to-residential conversion trend. It highlights factors such as diminishing supply of suitable stock and increasing secondary office values in the city center. The piece reflects on the transformation of Bristol's city center through the conversion of dated office buildings into student accommodation and residential flats, noting that the end of this conversion boom may be in sight due to these factors.
5. <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/bristol-city-council-war-on-bedsits-suffers-early-blow-as-student-house-decision-overturned-on-appeal/> - This article reports on a planning inspector overturning Bristol City Council's decision to reject a student housing development. The council had implemented a policy to prevent the conversion of family homes into houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in areas with a high percentage of such properties. The inspector's decision highlights the challenges in implementing this policy and the complexities involved in regulating student housing developments in the city.
6. <https://www.bristol247.com/opinion/your-say/end-in-sight-for-bristols-office-residential-conversion-boom/> - This article discusses the slowdown of Bristol's office-to-residential conversion trend. It highlights factors such as diminishing supply of suitable stock and increasing secondary office values in the city center. The piece reflects on the transformation of Bristol's city center through the conversion of dated office buildings into student accommodation and residential flats, noting that the end of this conversion boom may be in sight due to these factors.
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