

Planning application 19/00860/REM by Bath Rugby – Temporary East Stand.

In this application, Bath Rugby Ltd is seeking the removal of condition no.2 of planning permission ref. 17/01637/FUL which would allow the temporary structure, the East Stand, to be retained in situ throughout the summer months.

FoBRA considered the implications of this application at its meeting on 14 March and concluded overwhelmingly to oppose this application for the following reasons:

- 1 The structure is of a temporary nature and was permitted for a limited period subject to its removal at the end of each season. The Council's reasoning was made clear in the reasons for the condition – that permission for a structure of this nature could only be acceptable on such a basis, 'in the interests of the use, character and appearance of the site as recreational open space within the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site and the setting of listed buildings'. In our view, nothing has changed which would render the condition unnecessary.
- 2 Allowing the East Stand to remain over the summer months would mean that the openness of this valuable green space within our city centre would be restricted, as would the area available for other sports and recreational activities at a time when there is greatest demand, contrary to the terms under which the land was bequeathed to the people of Bath. As an inappropriate structure in the centre of our World Heritage City, it should be removed as soon as its use as a spectators' stand ends each season, in accordance with the terms of the current planning permission.
- 3 We are aware of the work in progress for the design of a new, larger stadium, but also aware that there are significant issues yet to be resolved and there has been no planning application submitted to date. There can be no certainty as to the timescale of any permission being granted or development commencing and there can therefore be no justification for allowing the stand to remain this year. Subject to these uncertain timescales, Bath Rugby Club Ltd may indeed find the need to apply for a further temporary permission for the East Stand to be constructed in 2021 and possibly beyond – it could set a dangerous precedent for untold future years if the retention of the stand were to be permitted in the current year.

FoBRA accordingly urges the Council to reject the application in the interests of the heritage city and residents of Bath.