The Pinesgate site is located within the Bath World Heritage Site (WHS) and within 100m of the Bath Conservation Area. There are several listed buildings within close proximity to the site. There are two existing office buildings on site.

The site is allocated within the B&NES designated Bath Western Riverside (BWR) area and the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area (BCREA) for mixed use including retail, offices, culture and leisure and residential.

A planning application for an office building on one half of the site was refused in 2015 against officer recommendation for approval. A revised planning application for the whole site was submitted in November 2015.

Many uses for the site have been considered over the years, including a car park, offices, a hotel and a supermarket. B&NES has identified a need for Grade A office floor space in Bath and this has therefore informed the decision on the most appropriate type of development to be proposed for this site.

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**Purpose of the project**

Pinesgate Investment Company Ltd submitted an application to Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) for the redevelopment of the Pinesgate site in Bath. The need for B&NES to deliver economic development, including Grade A office floorspace, jobs and investment has been a critical factor in the evolution of the proposals for this site. Kaplan College also identified the need for a new international language College.

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**Description of the project**

The need for EIA was established through a Screening Opinion received from B&NES which identified potential significant impacts in terms of landscape and visual and heritage aspects. The scheme consists of two elements, an office building and a college building with student accommodation, and associated parking. NPA coordinated the EIA, undertook the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), produced photomontages and undertook an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, bat survey and appraisal.
Lessons learnt
The reason for refusal of the 2014 application was that the building height and materials would, it was deemed, have led to an unacceptable level of detrimental impact on the WHS which is not in accordance with local planning policy and the BWR Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Ongoing discussion with B&NES has been essential to developing a scheme which fits within the WHS and BWR and BCREA zones. The building heights reflect the SPD documents and B&NES recommended switching the buildings to allow the massing and form to build up from the college to the east, nearest to residential properties, to the office building in the west. Bath stone has been proposed instead of brick as it is more in keeping with the location.

Visually Verifiable Montages (VVM) were prepared and have been critical to the assessment of the potential impacts on the environment. They show the buildings' built form and how the development sits within the area. Close views show how the buildings will look when driving along adjacent roads, as shown in the above VVM. The more distant views show how the development will look from important viewpoints around the city.

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Lessons learnt cont.

The VVMs allowed the Landscape Architect and the Heritage Consultant to base their assessments on the same information, thereby ensuring that these two overlapping disciplines were consistent in their approach. The VVMs also provided the Council with a visual representation of how the development is proposed to look once completed.

VVMs are not used for every project, however this scheme has shown how important the VVMs have been in identifying the potential impacts of the proposed development on the WHS, Conservation Area and listed buildings within close proximity to the site.

The Council gave planning consent to the scheme in February 2016.

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