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Student Flats Planned Beside Worcester's New Walkway

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Plans have been submitted to build new student apartments on unused land behind Foregate Street in Worcester, England, in a project that developers say will revitalise the area and provide sustainable housing for local college students.

A proposal recently filed with Worcester City Council, the local government authority often abbreviated as WCC, calls for constructing a three-story building with seven student bedrooms, shared kitchen and dining spaces, and dedicated bicycle parking. The site sits next to the newly opened Arches walkway, a £3.3 million development funded by WCC,

which connects the busy Foregate Street corridor to the River Severn and aims to boost foot traffic and economic activity for nearby businesses.

According to the application, the vacant lot was previously used for parking after older outbuildings were cleared away. Developers argue that the project would transform what is now an underutilised space into a more active street frontage. “The development is ideally situated for access to local shops and public transport,” the plans state, emphasising that the majority of students rely on buses, trains, or bicycles rather than cars. With parking discouraged in the area, the design focuses on walkability and the inclusion of secure cycle storage as recommended by the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide.

The Arches walkway, officially opened in March, has already become a well-used pedestrian route through the heart of Worcester. WCC leaders and local businesses have described the project as essential to attracting more visitors and supporting commerce along Foregate Street. Council leader Lynn Denham called the walkway “an enticing route down past the historic Arches to the Hive and the riverside.”

While the city’s leadership continues to highlight projects like this as evidence of regeneration, critics have raised concerns that recent policy decisions, especially from national Labour Party figures, have done little to address the broader economic challenges facing smaller cities. For Worcester, this proposal offers at least a practical step: repurposing vacant land to meet the rising demand for student housing in a way that fits with the long-term pedestrian-focused plans for the city.

The developers also stressed that the building’s modest scale and design will soften the visual impact of larger commercial properties nearby and improve the area’s overall appearance. They added that emergency and delivery vehicles will still be able to access the property when needed, without creating unnecessary congestion.

If approved, the project will add much-needed student accommodations while supporting the goals of The Arches, an initiative meant to link Worcester’s historic centre more directly to the River Severn and foster economic growth through thoughtful urban development.

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