The library represents a permanent place in the nation’s cultural life; it is part of the collective memory of the nation

The move from the British Museum to its new location in St Pancras in the 1970s, along with the land earmarked for its expansion northward, was to allow on-site room for the collection to grow; not as a backdrop to temporary and speculative office space.

The library does need more space not just for the constant stream of published texts but also for digital material and its gifts and donations. But it needs more viewing and listening rooms and galleries not offices.

Instead, the current proposal is to dwarf the north of the library behind a twelve-storey wall of unnecessary offices. Its hight will also scar the view of the carefully contoured pitched roofs of the entrance hall on the south side of the library when viewed from Euston Road.

And within the library itself they will impinge on the outlook and daylight levels in every one of the important north-facing rooms and external spaces of this Grade I Listed Building.

The proposal creates a wholly disproportionate 76.000 sq.m of commercial space alien to the intrinsic purpose of the library.

This is surely the most irresponsible way to treat one of the very few Grade I Listed Buildings of the late twentieth century, considered as “a landmark public building” when selected by Historic England in 2015.

The proposed office development is a short-term solution to a problem that does not exist for the library or its users.

If the DCMS and Treasury wish to raise extra finance over and above the grant-in-aid for the library then there is no reason why this need cannot follow the levelling up agenda and add this office space to the expansion plans for the library’s site in Boston Spa.

Overall, the development is an opportunistic use of the site for a temporary gain unrelated to the use and purpose of the library