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## **The Society's response to a planning exhibition regarding proposed redevelopment of the block comprising 6 Upper York Street – the Lakota Club – and the former Coroners Court**

### **1. Summary**

Subject to our comments below, the Society supports this development proposal in a part of Bristol that needs improvement. Along with the current major project under way at The Carriageworks this would be a welcome change in the Stokes Croft area.

### **2. Introduction**

The Society is grateful to the developers for the invitation to the exhibition. Public consultation is effective when it occurs early enough in the planning process to affect the final form of development. The Society welcomes the regeneration of this long-neglected site and so we aim to comment positively to improve the scheme where possible.

We are aware of redevelopment of other local sites, including 7 – 29 Wilder St, 1 – 3 Backfields, 2 – 12 on the N side of Stokes Croft, and 1 – 9 and 11 – 17 on the N side. These in turn may bring forward redevelopment of other local low-grade commercial buildings. The developer and the local planning authority must therefore consider this development in the context of wider local redevelopment. Multiple developments give opportunities to invest in the public realm.

### **3. The site**

The site is a triangular block bounded by Upper York Street, Moon Street and Backfields. It is the setting of the grade II listed Coroner's Court and Headmasters House - both in disrepair - and the locally listed 6 Upper York Street. A wall runs around the site perimeter and the buildings are surrounded by hard standing.

#### **4. The development**

The scheme is to convert a former bottling factory at 6 Upper York Street – now a well-known nightclub the Lakota Club – and the former Coroners Court, together with some new building and some rebuilding, into 54 residential units. There will be a small amount of ground floor business space, plus the creation of a private garden.

#### **5. Uses**

The Society supports new residential development. We note and support the small amount of employment space proposed. Ideally a cafe or similar business located on the SE corner (Backfields/Upper York St) would improve the proposal, but we appreciate that the wall at this corner is a listed structure which presents difficulties.

#### **6. Mass height and design**

The Society supports the overall design and massing of the proposed development. The roofline is an improvement on earlier designs. We welcome the overall design to link two quite different buildings, the Victorian Gothic Coroners Court and the brick-and-render Bottling Plant/Lakota Club building.

The Society understands that there are no significant external alterations proposed to the Coroners Court building. We assume that details about stone restoration, new glazing bar details (where missing) and roof lights would be agreed with the Council's conservation officer. We would like to see the design for the Bottle Works ground floor developed. There are several blocked windows. This dignified building deserves a significant entrance.

The development is within the Stoke Croft Conservation Area and has the potential to affect views from the Brunswick Square and Portland Square Conservation Area. An important view is from the NE from the front of the Baptist Chapel on City Road. From this point one looks down onto almost the entire block. This viewpoint makes the roofline of the new-build element an important aspect of the design and requires the planning officer's assessment.

#### **7. Materials**

The Society supports the use of modern materials. We appreciate the design attention given to the north-east (Upper York Street) elevation which aims for a pleasing blend of the existing bottling plant/Lakota Club elevation with the proposed new-build elevation above and extending to the left when viewed from the street. We note that all the attractive existing windows and door openings onto Upper York St are to be retained, and we strongly support this. We like the way that the proposed windows in the new-build part of this elevation have the same rhythm and size as the existing windows openings.

Many handsome buildings in the area are sadly disfigured by tagging. We urge the designers to consider ways to discourage this anti-social practice as far as possible by design and choice of materials.

#### **8. Access and the streetscape**

The Society welcomes the proposal to replace the hard-standing car park with landscaped garden for the use of residents. The Society suggests that the developer together with owners of 7-29 Wilder Street / 1-3 Backfields and the Council undertake a study to select improvement opportunities in the surrounding streets. The Society would prefer the introduction of hard landscaping in the area created by the chamfer at the corner of Moon Street and Backfields. Apart from upgrading the surviving setts and pavements, an open space at the Backfields Moon Street junction offers an opportunity to create an attractive public place with views of the listed building. The Society does not support machining the setts to produce a smooth road surface in this area.