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20th November 2018

The Society's response to the second, revised proposal to redevelop land between Silverthorne Lane and the Feeder Canal 18/05434/PREAPP

1 The proposal

John Lysaght Properties Ltd and Feeder Estates (the Developers) propose to redevelop the site for a mix of uses including an 1,800-place secondary school, new homes, employment uses, purpose-built student accommodation to serve the new University Campus, retail and ancillary facilities related to the housing and student uses.

2 Introduction

This response is based on an exterior visit to the site and the Developers' documents. The Society strongly supports the redevelopment of this land and the return of the site to economic use. This response discusses several issues that redevelopment raises.

2.1 Bristol University's outline planning application has increased development interest. This proposal must be seen in the context of a speculative proposal for the cancelled Arena site and planning enquiries for 13-14 Feeder Road and 59-68 Feeder Road together with the Council's intention to prepare a planning framework for the land use and redevelopment of St. Philip's Marsh between the Feeder and the River Avon.

2.2 Because of the size of the site, we assume that the application proposes a flexible framework document that will evolve with the phased delivery of redevelopment.

3 Land use

3.1 Plots A and B.

These blocks would contain a total of 500 residential units some in tall buildings. The Developers' planning statement acknowledges that the commercial use on the site is lower than the percentage recommended in the Temple Quay Spatial Framework (the Framework). This the part of the site that is least attractive for living. There may also be a flooding issue. The Society suggests that the residential blocks create an opportunity to include commercial uses in the lower floors, particularly Block A.

3.2 **Blocks C, D and E**

The Society supports the use of this land for employment and educational use. The Society asks that the scheme considers the school's safety obligations at an early stage to ensure minimum constraints and interference with the other uses on the site.

3.4 **Block F**

This site is suitable for student accommodation. This development would provide 750 bed places of student accommodation. A development of this size should contribute to the local housing needs as part of a mixed development. Emerging Council policy ULH 6: 'Specialist Student Housing' supports the inclusion of residential space within large student accommodation of 100 bed spaces or more, to form part of mixed used developments.

4 **Demolition and heritage assets**

4.1 The Society is impressed by the quality of the Statement of Significance of the Historic Assets. We have not entered the site. The Society assumes that the loss of detail in the surviving structures will be agreed with the Conservation Officer. The Society's principal interest in the heritage assets is their townscape value, which in the context of this site includes their contribution to the development's interior views. We leave it to others to respond to the archaeological and engineering properties of the surviving structures. The Society is pleased that the proposal will retain and reuse the Feeder Canal facing walls.

4.2 The Society understands that there are no substantial alterations proposed for the Grade II* listed office building and gates and we assume that the details of any interior modifications to adapt the building to a new use will be agreed with the Conservation Officer.

4.3 The Society would welcome the reconstruction of the missing elements of the east entrance which could become another positive feature.

5 **Height and design**

5.1 The Framework advises that the projected height of the blocks at the west and east end of the site should be medium height, 5-8 floors. This planning advice is consistent with new policy of the Urban Living SPD. The Society does not support tall buildings to 'bookend' the development. Tall buildings on this site would not be a desirable outcome. Tall buildings would undermine the significance of the listed heritage assets and harm the historic industrial character that is this site's principal feature.

5.2 At the west end a tall building would dominate the Grade II listed Marble Mosaic Building and harm its waterside setting. The Society supports the Framework planning advice. The Society is concerned about the impact of the tall buildings on views out of the site, particularly towards St Mary Redcliffe. The view could be an important element of the future townscape.

5.3 If the Council is persuaded that a tall building is appropriate for the student accommodation at the east end of the site this must be subject to the assessment of

a views analysis to understand the suitability of the site to accommodate a tall building.

- 5.4 The Society suggests that a pedestrian/cycling route through the site to an exit on or close to Avon Street would be a substantial planning gain and mitigate the use of Silverthorne Lane. A coupled suggestion is that the buildings to the west of the school should be built around a series of interlinking courtyards through which the internal pedestrian/cycle route would run.
- 5.5 It is important that the site's internal public realm creates people friendly spaces. The Society expects a high-quality public realm within the site compatible with the aims of the Urban Living SPD.

6 **Access to the site**

The earlier response made more extensive comments about the inadequate access for the proposed future uses of the site. We understand that the developers are in the process of producing proposals to overcome the constraints imposed by the local road network. The Society notes that there are no nearby bus services.

- 6.1 **Silverthorne Lane to Gas Lane** – this stretch of road requires an engineering solution to make it safe for the anticipated level of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6.2 **Silverthorne Lane to the east of Gas Lane**
Treating the whole road as shared space could be the only option with a careful selection of vehicles permitted to use the road by a Traffic Order. Improved lighting is another requirement.
- 6.3 **The Silverthorne Lane railway passage**
This is the principal access to the school and must be improved to make the tunnel child-friendly. We have not considered the impact of the development on the local road system to the east of the tunnel.
- 6.4 **Feeder Road**
It is necessary to improve access to the site across the Canal even without the development of a new school. The bridge at the east of the site appears to be in poor condition. It is not wide enough to allow pedestrians and cyclists to pass one another. The existing bridge should be enlarged. A site, as heavily populated as this development will become requires a new foot/cycling bridge between the current footbridge and the Marsh Bridge. A site opposite the new school might be an appropriate place.