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18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

## **The Society's response to a pre-application 19/04875/PREAPP to build "Arc" a mobile viewing platform in Millennium Square**

### **The development**

The scheme would put in place an elliptical glass viewing cabin or gondola 8.4m in diameter supported by two tapering and forked carbon-fibre masts. The mast pivots and rotates at the base, lifting the cabin over 70m up into the air to a vertical position and rotating it. The cabin would carry up to 42 paying passengers on a 20 minute "flight" over Millennium Square giving extensive views across the city. When not in use the masts and cabin would normally be parked in the upright position.

### **Summary**

The Society supports the principle of the development of this visitor attraction. However, the Society would need to see a views analysis before we could determine the impact of the pylon and mast upon the setting of the local heritage assets.

### **Uses**

The Society supports new visitor attractions if they are sympathetic to their surroundings and make a positive contribution to the city. The Arc would be a popular visitor attraction; it would create employment and bring economic benefits to Millennium Square and to the wider city.

### **Impact on local heritage assets**

The Arc is an innovative and imaginative design. The National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) para 184 states that, when heritage assets may be affected by a proposal the planning authority should take this into account to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Para 185 goes on to say that "*any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset ... from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification*". This includes "*substantial harm to or loss of: ... assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, grade I and II\* listed buildings ... should be wholly exceptional*".

The Arc will be linked to the former Grade II listed Cannon's Marsh Goods Shed. It will change the appearance of Millennium Square which is a well-planned public space. To the north stands the Grade I listed Bristol Cathedral.

**The critical planning question, "Would the development would harm the setting of Millennium square and the neighbouring listed buildings?"**

The Society assumes that the Council will ask the Applicant to provide verified views of the pylon and mast. The near and medium distance close to Millennium Square and from the south side of the Harbour would be relevant viewpoints. Until we see verified views we cannot assess whether the pylon and mast would cause harm to the surrounding heritage context. If there is harm, a views analysis would be necessary to decide whether the social and economic benefits of development would outweigh the identified harm.

An alternative approach might be to ensure that when the mast is not in use, it rests horizontally. The Society does not know whether this suggestion would create an engineering problem that the Applicant cannot resolve. The enabling works proposed to the former goods shed to provide ground facilities for the Arc appear to be appropriate..