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## **Globe House Eugene Street - The Society response to the planning application - 19/04326/F**

### **The proposal**

Part demolition of the site to erect 79 residential apartments with integrated amenity and 523 square metres of office space, access, landscaping and associated infrastructure

### **Public engagement**

Westworks (WW) consulted the Society on the initial proposal. We regret that despite the Society's enquiries, our first view of the revised scheme is this planning application. We note that the City Design Team are in the process of drafting the Frome Gateway Framework (the Framework) which would offer benefits for the development of the Globe House site (GH) which must be considered in terms of the wider area.

The Society is sympathetic to the WW's wish to develop and return this long-derelict site to economic use without waiting for the Framework's adoption. However, the Society is unable to access whether the provision in the development for the future reconnection of James Street with Eugene Street is enough or whether the Vestry Lane access could prejudice development to the north west. We assume that provision of land to provide for the future street connection and a widened and improved footpath on Vestry are matters that a section 106 agreement could accommodate. We have not considered whether flood defence/mitigation works would affect the GH development.

### **Planning background**

The recently adopted Old Market Neighbourhood Development Plan (OMNP) has significantly influenced several recent developments. The OMNP adopted a site-specific proposal for GH. C12.1 Provides that development should:

- *Reuse and sensitively restore the existing buildings, which are identified as unlisted buildings of merit, retaining the existing form of building and fenestration pattern.*
- *Use the ground floor for employment space with residential on the two floors above.*
- *Include new buildings, maximum 4 storeys high, with some live work units fronting onto and accessed independently from Eugene Street, and some 3 bedroom or larger dwellings that have private outdoor amenity space*
- *Include on-site residential parking at a ratio of 1 space per 2 dwellings or better.*

The Society supports the proposal to redevelop but we have several concerns that we hope will lead to revisions of the scheme during the planning process.

### **Density of the development**

The proposal would produce a high residential density for a suburban site. The earlier consent 13/03370/R permitted the conversion of GH with a density of: 214 dwellings/hectare, which is a high density for the area. The current proposal would produce a density of 370 dwellings/hectare. Comparable developments are Harbourside (204 d/h) and Wapping Wharf (194 d/h which suggests that too much development is proposed for the site. The Urban Living Special Planning Document – Making successful living at higher densities has an overriding purpose, how to increase densities and raise design quality. A design-led approach faces serious challenges managing this level of density. There are always questions about the quality of the amenities offered to the future residents.

### **These are the consequence of the density of develop in relation to this proposal**

- 1 The ratio of single aspect units, with no cross-ventilation, to double aspect units would be in a ratio of 2:1 which is sub-optimal.
- 2 There are 42 single bedroom single person flats, nearly 40% of the total. Single person flats are inflexible and contrary to policy.
- 3 There remains the concern of the separation distances between blocks A and the seven-floor block B which could give rise to privacy and overlooking issues from windows and balconies.
- 4 Whilst the design gives attention to the quality of the courtyard amenity space, we question whether the quantity of amenity space available is enough for the proposed number of residents who could exceed 200, including children. To comply with OMNP Policy C5, we would expect generous public amenity space. Not all residents would have private amenity space.
- 5 The proposal does not calculate the likely child yield within the development using the Child Yield Calculator.
- 6 There is an oversupply of one and two-bed flats in Old Market. OMNP Policy C5 proposes that new development should have a better housing balance. Only 1 and 2-bedroom flats are proposed. There should be a proportion of 3-bedroom flats.
- 7 The development offers only some visitor and disabled parking. OMNP policy T3 says, *“Residential development proposals on sites more than 100 metres from Old Market Street or West Street will be expected to provide on-site car parking spaces at a minimum ratio of 1 car space for every 2 dwellings.”*
- 8 The development would contain 523 square metres of office space. OMNP policy C12.1 proposes the use of the ground floor for employment space with residential on the floors above. In this area residential and commercial uses happily coexist. The Society would like to see greater commercial use to contribute to the diversity and vitality of this location.

**Building design**

The Society supports the revision of the design for the development of the retained GH elevations. The Society is concerned that the strongly horizontal design of the new Eugene Street elevation could dominate the retained, locally listed GH façade. We suggest that there should other option(s) for the design of the new elevation. Would a façade composed of smaller architectural elements with a vertical emphasis could produce a result that is more subservient to and enhances the retained elevation? The materials proposed for the new elevation would distinguish it adequately from the retained work.

**Conclusion**

The Society assumes that the City Design Team will assess the impact of the proposed seven storey block on the immediate residential context that is lower rise and on the potential development of the wider area within the Frome Gateway. This will give the opportunity to reconsider the housing balance, amenity space, and other matters to which we refer.