



an independent force for a better Bristol

3rd February 2020

The Society's response to planning application - Vauxhall House Coronation Road 19/06107/F

The proposal

Demolition of all standing buildings and redevelopment for up to 158 flats together with associated car parking, landscaping, access, infrastructure and riverside pedestrian walkway.

Public engagement

Although the Society responded to the 2017 and the 2019 preapplication proposals, we regret that the Developer did not notify us of its final preapp, public consultation event. This response is based to the planning application documents.

Summary

The Society does not support the loss of employment land. If Crest Nicholson (the Developer) can provide evidence to justify the loss of employment land, the Society supports residential development if there is a greater provision of employment space in a mixed-use development. The scale and massing of the proposed buildings is an improvement on the two earlier, preapplication proposals.

Demolition

There are no buildings or structures of architectural merit on the site.

Change of use

The first planning question is the loss of employment space that residential development would cause. Policies BCS8, DM12 and BCAP7 only permit the loss of an employment use in circumstances which include where there is no demand for the employment use. Policy DM12 emphasises the importance of retaining employment sites near where people live. The relative isolation of the site from other industrial land is not important. The continued use of the land for commercial purposes is evidence of its viability for employment use. The decision to abandon employment use is binary. The provision of live/work units is a token given that the whole site is employment land.

Without prejudice to the Society's principal objection to the change of use, if the Developer produces evidence that there is no demand for industry or warehousing, the Society supports the principle of a residential led redevelopment. However, there should be a greater proportion of employment uses.

To respond to the planning application, the Society adopts the development template set out in the Urban Living Special Planning Document - Making successful places at higher densities.

Q1.1 Has the scheme adopted an approach to urban intensification which is broadly consistent with its setting?

The proposed buildings of 3 floors plus ground make a better transition to the domestic townscape of the Coronation Road and the low-industrial buildings to the west than the earlier schemes. Similarly, the development is more sympathetic to its riverbank setting when viewed from Cumberland Road. This site will be a trip generator. Although the North Street local retail centre is within walking distance, the bus service is infrequent. The heavy traffic in the Coronation Road is unpleasant for cyclists.

The scheme's roofs mix pitched and flat roofs to respond to other Harbourside developments. The Society suggests that all five blocks have pitched roofs. The angles and pitches would create an interesting skyline whether seen from Coronation Road or from the north of the New Cut.

Q1.2 Does the scheme contribute towards creating a vibrant and equitable neighbourhood?

The busy Coronation Road will cut off this development from its immediate neighbours to the south. The additional residential population will contribute to the local economy.

Q1.3 Does the scheme respond positively to either the existing context, or in areas undergoing significant change, an emerging context?

The development does not prejudice the possible redevelopment potential of the land to the west. There is no real development opportunity to the east of the site. A riverside walk that extends beyond the site appears to be distantly aspirational.

Q1.4 Does the scheme provide people-friendly streets and spaces? And -

Q1.5 Does the scheme deliver a comfortable microclimate for its occupants, neighbours and passers-by? And

The scheme creates a series of pocket parks and a linear green bank above the New Cut. This dense development offers little opportunity to do no more than is proposed. The introduction of outdoor furniture and fitness equipment is welcome.

Q1.6 Has access, car parking and servicing been efficiently and creatively integrated into the scheme?

The scheme provides the maximum car parking ratio that policy permits which is realistic given the poor public transport connections. This high-density development has relatively little open space per resident and surface car parking should be avoided, if possible. We

suggest that the developer considers measures to inhibit surface parking other than in the designated parking areas.

The Society would prefer to see as much of the Coronation Road boundary wall retained as is possible. Apart from the contribution that the wall makes to the character of this part of the conservation area the wall provides a barrier against the noise and pollution from Coronation Road. We acknowledge that wall will be lost to create a principal entrance with safe sightlines. We ask whether the proposed lay-by on the north side of Coronation Road outweighs the benefit of the retained wall?

We are pleased that the Developer will install a Puffin Crossing in the Coronation Road and that there will be no right turn from the development into Coronation Road.

Q2.1 Does the scheme make building entrances and shared internal spaces welcoming, attractive and easy to use?

The scheme includes large entrances to the residential blocks.

Q2.2 Does the scheme provide practical, attractive and easily accessible communal amenity space that meets the needs of its target resident profile? And

Q2.3 Does the scheme provide enough private outdoor space? And

Q2.4 Does the scheme create attractive, well designed and well maintained private outdoor spaces?

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Q2.5 Does the scheme creatively integrate children's play?

See the answer to question 1.5

Q2.6 Are internal layouts ergonomic and adaptable? And

Q2.7 Does the scheme safeguard privacy and minimise noise transfer between homes?

And

Q2.8 Does the scheme maximise opportunities for daylight and sunlight of internal spaces; avoiding single aspect homes?

The scheme produces attractive, naturally lit, entrances and access cores. However, there is continuous discussion in the Design and Access Statement about overlooking between the blocks and the quantity of single aspect flats. Both these problems arise from the ambition to build as many as 158 units although this total is reduced from the 179 flats of the earlier scheme. We are not convinced that the asymmetry between the north and the south facing single aspect units in Block D nor the offset balconies will protect the single aspect flats from being uncomfortably hot in strong sunlight. The units would have no relieving cross-draughts. The Society believes that this would be a more successful development if it reduced the overall number of units to decrease the number of single aspect flats. The rearrangement of the units into fewer larger units might, at the same time, produce a solution to any overlong, artificially lit access corridors. In a setting of free-standing residential blocks as many flats as

possible should have habitable balconies. Juliet balconies do not provide adequate external amenity space.

Energy efficiency - there is no indication that this development will be zero carbon. New build zero carbon development is achieved by other local planning authorities. Bristol has pledged to become zero carbon by 2030 which should be a requirement of all new build development.