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26 November 2020.

ASHTON GATE - PROPOSALS FOR STADIUM AND LONGMOOR VILLAGE - REVISIONS.

The Society thanks Martin Griffiths and the development team for the proposals for presenting their plans to us. We have set out our response below which we are also copying to the City Council.

The proposal.

Hybrid planning application for:

Full permission for sports and convention centre (4000 seats), 230 bed hotel, 30,000sq ft of offices (9 storeys), 140 one and two bed flats in 6, 7 and 18 storey blocks and 540 space multi-storey car park (7 storeys) on land adjoining the stadium;
Outline permission for circa 500 two, three and four bedroom homes on site 500m to south west of the stadium.

Summary.

The Society reserves its position until full details of the proposals are available. We are taking the opportunity, though, to respond to your recent presentation with an overall view together with our main concerns.

Bristol Civic Society supports, in principle, the development of the land adjoining Ashton Gate Stadium which will create a sporting and hospitality hub of benefit to the City and south Bristol in particular and boost employment opportunities in the area. However, the Society is generally averse to tall residential buildings. They are visually intrusive and, unless very well managed, frequently result in poor living conditions for their occupants. We cannot, therefore, support the 18 storey residential tower.

We urge the developers, Bristol City Council and transport providers to maximise public transport accessibility, and other measures that could lead to a further reduction in on-site parking in order to achieve a sustainable development.

The Society is supportive of residential development on the Longmoor Village site. We will want to see a variety of size and tenure options, good access including pedestrian and cycle links particularly to the east and high quality public spaces within the development as well as on the periphery.

ASHTON GATE STADIUM PROPOSALS.

The Society has not changed its earlier overall view on the proposed development namely,

“The Society strongly supports the new uses that the Club wishes to introduce. In addition to the creation of a centre for sporting excellence, the scheme will be a substantial investment of private money in south Bristol. Expansion would considerably increase local employment opportunities for young people with modest educational attainments. Aspirations include attracting residential conferences business to the stadium. The Society supports the introduction of new homes on the site.”

We continue, however, to be strongly opposed to the proposed 18 storey tower block. Our concerns over the social and environmental harm arising from high living were conveyed at length in our February 2019 submission and we are disappointed that such a tall residential building remains part of the scheme. The location of the residential tower adjacent to the main road is also not ideal. We assume that the Council will require visual justification in relation to the views down the Avon Gorge and of the Suspension Bridge from Winterstoke Road and further up the Bedminster Down ridge. If the City Council consider the high building acceptable, the Society urges that it is designed to a high standard for market rent or purchase so that its occupants would, on the whole, choose to live there and it would be well managed.

The Society understands that the proposed development will generate a considerable number of car journeys and we urge the developers to maximise public transport accessibility and not to give up on securing a train station at Ashton Gate. We ask the Council to work with the developers and public transport providers to ensure a high degree of sustainability minimising road traffic and maximising public transport access. The Society appreciates that the Portishead line is still some years from opening to passengers but there is a longer term opportunity to provide an interchange between the rail line and the metrobus. This would not only improve public transport accessibility to the stadium but also have wider benefits for those travelling between Bristol and points on the Portishead line. The proposed development could act as a catalyst to bring the necessary agencies together.

The potential of the Long Ashton Park and Ride to reduce the number of car trips to the stadium and its environs should also be fully explored. We would hope that this would reduce the need for on-site parking. Further reduction of the number of spaces provided on-site would be welcomed by the Society. We also urge the developers to continue working with the City Council on measures to keep road traffic bound for the stadium away from the city centre. The proposed multi storey car park is a dominant feature of the development. The Society urges that its visual prominence is reduced.

We note that the proposals include cycling hubs. We urge plentiful provision convenient for entrances and overlooked for enhanced security. The Society hopes that the development team will encourage the development of a walking and cycling route alongside Longmoor Brook between the Long Ashton Park and Ride and the stadium.

We await further details of public realm proposals but regard the space between the stadium and convention centre as having great potential and look forward to detailed plans.

LONGMOOR VILLAGE.

The Society welcomes the proposal for around 500 dwellings on this site in accordance with the Local Plan. We understand that all matters apart from access will be reserved but would like to put the following comments on the record. We would wish to see a variety of unit sizes and tenure options. Open space, both public and private, should be provided within the development and not just on the periphery. The footpath alongside Colliters Brook should not be expanded to include a cycle route as there is already a cycle route alongside the metrobus route.

