

## **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT BLACKSWARTH ROAD – BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY RESPONSE.**

### **The Site.**

The site is adjacent to the riverside foot and cycle path at the eastern end of the commercial area in Blackswarth Road. It is located in the Avon Valley Conservation Area and is zoned as a principal industrial and warehouse area in the Local Plan. However, in the Draft Development Allocations in the Draft Local Plan Review the site is proposed for a residential led, mixed use development with an estimated capacity of up to 75 homes (BDA 2801). Agents are marketing the site for commercial purposes. It is generally rather rundown at present and we believe it might have been the site of a lead works. A remediation survey and plan will be essential for any development. The site is level but there is a significant level difference up to the adjacent site. The access to Blackswarth Road is close to a blind corner and the road itself is narrow and, at times, fairly busy.

Woodstock Homes are proposing a development comprising 85 one and two bedroom apartments in five largely orthogonal blocks ranging in height from four to six storeys. They are situated immediately adjacent to the foot and cycle path. Landscaped strips would separate the blocks and further landscaping is indicated on the northern and western peripheries. 60+ parking spaces would be provided to the north of the flats.

### **The Society's View.**

The Society would welcome the redevelopment of this rundown site but feels strongly that the potential for a contemporary employment generating development should be the first priority since the site is identified as a principle industrial and warehouse area in the Local Plan and is part of a larger commercial estate. However, if the Draft Local Plan Review is adopted to include the proposed allocation for BDA2801 the Society would expect to see an element of employment generating floorspace as part of a mixed use proposal.

If the Council considers a residential development acceptable, the Society considers that a higher design standard with more visual interest is required to enable this prominent site to enhance the Conservation Area. A lower rise development, including accommodation suitable for families should be considered. The Society supports the Council's affordable housing policies and would expect to see them applied to a development here.

Whether the site is developed for employment or residential use, the public realm needs to be of a high standard and to reflect the wooded character of the Conservation Area at this point. Particular attention must be paid to the boundary with the riverside foot and cycle path where currently there is an unsightly wall, which rises above eye level because of the level difference. This is an unpleasant feature at present and the opportunity must be taken to create a pleasant and safe experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

Access to and from Blackswarth Road is difficult and potentially dangerous because traffic levels can be high at some times of the day and there is a blind corner not far from the entrance. Care will need to be taken to ensure that it could safely cope with traffic generated by a proposed development whether it is commercial or residential. The Society considers that a development on the site should favour active travel rather than making extensive

provision for car parking. In particular, cycling should be encouraged with safe, easy access to the foot and cycle path and adequate provision for parking and storing bicycles.