

BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO UMBERSLADE'S PRESENTATION OF ITS PROPOSALS FOR WAPPING WHARF NORTH.

Introduction.

Bristol Civic Society appreciates the time given by Umberslade to present to the Society its proposals for the Wapping Wharf North site. Reaction from members is fairly evenly divided between those who are broadly enthusiastic about the proposals and those who have considerable objections to them. In these circumstances, it is not possible to convey a single Society view on the scheme and so the views of those for and against it are summarised below for the developers and the Council to consider.

Supportive Comments.

Overall, the scheme was well thought through by developers with a successful track record in this part of Bristol.

The proposed buildings, particularly the ziggurat form, would contribute to the variety of building styles around the harbour and have a visual appeal of their own.

The vegetation proposed for the buildings would be striking **but** it would have to be carefully planned for the conditions and well maintained.

Public realm and pedestrian route proposals were very welcome. Rope Walk, in particular, would be an attractive route and place.

Public access to the upper floors of the 12 storey building to take in the view would be an important asset.

The mix of residential, business, services and retail uses would be good for the overall vibrancy of the area.

Umberslade's approach to getting in local independent businesses, and provision in the development for the existing businesses to stay, being temporarily relocated during the development was welcomed.

Objections and Concerns.

The main focus of the objections was on the height and the bulky mass of the proposed buildings which were felt to:

- Diminish the impact of the cranes and hide them altogether from some viewpoints particularly from the south and west;

- Harmfully breach the silhouette of the M Shed building;

- Be an unfortunate precedent for future proposals in the harbourside area;

- Block the glimpse of the harbour from Gaol Ferry Steps and possibly other glimpsed views harming the attractiveness of the area as a pedestrian experience.

Design concerns included:

- Use of flat roofs;

The devotion to steel, glass and blank black and white walls particularly if the proposed vegetation failed or was not properly maintained.

The informal and relaxed atmosphere of the area could be lost.

The possible adverse impact on the viability of the town centre arising from the expansion in business activity at Wapping Wharf. (See point below re. an impact assessment.)

Doubts that existing businesses could afford premises in the new development particularly in the upper levels of the ziggurat building.

The proposals were very different from the agreed masterplan and, in particular, replace the westward decline in building heights with an ascending profile.

Other Suggestions.

We assume the city council will require an impact assessment in line with paragraph 90 of the NPPF if the proposals exceed the threshold.

The Society would like to see viewpoints agreed with the Council and verified images produced for them. More verified views and images of the proposals from the south are required.

The scheme for greening the buildings with vegetation must be agreed with the Council as must the management plan for maintaining it. The proposed planting will need to take into account the different conditions on the various elevations.

The opportunity must be taken by the developers and the Council to develop the potential of Museum Square as a public space.

More affordable housing would be welcome.