

BARROW ROAD – PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF SITE.

The Proposal.

Galliard Homes are proposing to redevelop the former Mecca Bingo Hall and Pure Gym warehouse building located between St Philip's Causeway and Lawrence Hill High Street. 340 new dwellings comprising a mix of town houses and flats are planned. The town houses would be on the eastern and southern boundaries near to existing low rise houses and the flats would be in blocks from 10 to 16 storeys in height on the northern and western peripheries. This would involve the demolition of the warehouse building.

Land Use.

The Society has no objection to the principle of residential development on this site which is not zoned in the Local Plan nor identified for a particular form of development in the Local Plan Review. The warehouse building has no townscape merit and the large provision of surface level parking is inappropriate by contemporary standards.

Height, Massing and Scale.

We are supportive of the town houses proposed for the southern and eastern boundaries of the site which are appropriate in height and scale to the nearby low rise houses. However, we cannot support the proposed height of the flats. The cycle path forms a natural edge to the higher development on the northern side and we feel that flats of this height should not extend further south where there is a predominance of low rise buildings. The L-shaped massing is oppressive and the proposed buildings would overbear and possibly over-shadow the group of low-rise houses the other side of the cycle path. These houses are already adjacent to the Kingsmarsh House high-rise block.

Unit Size and Tenure Issues.

We understand that a significant proportion of affordable housing. The Society would welcome this as it is supportive of the Council's planning policies concerning affordable housing. The proposed provision of town houses is welcome and other dwellings should provide a variety of unit sizes and tenures.

Air Quality and Noise Issues.

The site is located close to St Philip's Causeway and development on its western periphery would be particularly vulnerable to noise and pollution generated by the traffic on this road. This could be harmful to living conditions unless great care is taken to provide insulation and air quality control systems which allow ventilation without exposing residents to excessive traffic noise. Equally, residents must be protected from noise without losing out on acceptable ventilation.

Public Realm.

Public open space would be vital to the success of residential development on this site. Research carried out for the Frome Gateway regeneration (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1070200/full>) suggests single larger areas of open space yield better health outcomes than dispersed open space. This is a much smaller site but the principle would be worth bearing in mind before the

layout is finalised. Public open space will need a maintenance regime agreed to avoid it falling into poor condition. We understand that the wall adjacent to the proposed landscaped strip at the north east of the site will be breached to allow access to Tenby Street and to the nearby Gaunts Ham Park. We would support this and suggest that further points in the wall could be punched through to allow more surveillance of the open space and play areas.

Parking and Access.

Low levels of private parking would be appropriate in view of the bus and rail communications available. The pedestrian link to Lawrence Hill close to the station is very beneficial.

Climate Change.

The Society is supportive of the Council's policies to mitigate the impacts of climate change and will expect development proposals to comply with these.