

**23/01475/F – LAND AT TEMPLE ISLAND – DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICES, RETAIL SPACE, HOTEL AND CONFERENCE FACILITIES AND 500 RESIDENTIAL UNITS.**

Bristol Civic Society was disappointed with the proposals for this important site. We cannot support the preapplication plans as they stand. Our concerns are set out in the following paragraphs.

**Overview of the proposal for this important site.**

Temple island will be the gateway to the commercial centre of Bristol on the approaches from Bath on the A4 and Wells on the A37. The Society feels strongly that the proposal, as presented at this stage, fails to live up to this important role which would require an outstanding development. Instead, the site is to be laid out with a series of buildings of varied height but mostly tall. Despite some architectural relief, these buildings are largely orthogonal in nature and located around the periphery of the site. The Society believes that Bristol deserves a response to this important location which accords with national policy to produce beautiful architecture. We strongly urge the applicants to address this.

**Height, Massing and Layout.**

Although there are proposals for tall buildings on sites to the north and east, some of the proposed blocks appear to be taller than these. There is some step down of the residential blocks towards the existing residential development in Totterdown but, nonetheless, the site would be dominated by tall blocks. From some viewpoints, the massing will be broken by the gaps between the buildings although the Society is far from convinced that this will form an attractive prospect. We await the visual impact analysis with interest.

. We are concerned that this layout will create an unattractive environment at ground level which would be exacerbated by the effects of the tall buildings on wind currents. The Society would prefer a far greater sense of enclosure and intimacy at ground level and we feel that the proposal's aspiration of creating a square in the centre will not work well with the proposed layout. We wonder if this could be achieved with a lower rise development spread over a broader footprint comprising more interesting building shapes, particularly at ground level

We are not clear what residential density is being sought in the development and what alternatives have been considered for achieving this. Information on the proposed density would be helpful.

**Circulation.**

We have a number of concerns about both pedestrian and traffic circulation. The success of the development in terms of its liveliness and, possibly the viability of the retail outlets, will depend on footfall particularly when the conference facilities are not in use and there is no guarantee at this stage that the hotel and conference facilities will be built or be successful if they are. This is a major challenge as the site is bounded by a number of physical barriers and is not, as yet, on a clear route to anywhere.

Improving the connectivity on foot and by bike is, therefore, important. The connectivity from Bath Road is the only obvious opportunity.

The proposal is for:

- 1) A pedestrian stepped access from the east side of Bath Road. (The presentation we received showed a lift adjoining the stepped access. This is not specifically included in the Design Document. It is very important that access for those with impaired mobility is provided.)
- 2) 'An aspiration', possibly needing approval from Network Rail, for a 'corkscrew' walk and cycle connection under the Bath Road to the west side of Bath Road.

Neither of the access routes 1) and 2) is very attractive whether on foot or bike, because they both connect to the hostile environment that is the A4, but they are better than nothing. A previous proposal was for a ramp down from Bath Road, which could accommodate cyclists, but this is not mentioned. The existing Bath Road shared pavement walk/cycle route is one of the worst pieces of walking or cycle infrastructure in Bristol. The solution would be a new structure cantilevered off the bridge over the railway but this, we appreciate, would be very expensive. Neither of these is mentioned, however, even as an aspiration.

If there's going to be a large hotel and conference centre on the island, lots of people will want access the site by vehicle. Some conference delegates will want to travel by car (even if requested not to) as there are many places without train access to Bristol. Access through St Phillips is awkward and we fear there could be severe traffic congestion on Bath Road at peak times. This needs to be resolved or clarity provided on the operation of the site as a car free development apart from deliveries and servicing.

### **Public Realm.**

The Society has no particular observations on the public realm proposals at this stage other than to support access to the riverside and sensitive landscaping of it. We believe that the success of the public realm would depend on resolving the issues we raised about the layout above.

### **Heritage.**

We note there is to be a heritage assessment and are aware of historical features on the site. One of these is the high wall on the western boundary which retains and supports the A4. We understand that it is considered fragile and this needs to be addressed in terms of potential impact on the site and the main route to and from the south to Bristol city centre.

### **Impact on Climate Change.**

The Society supports the Council's policies for mitigating the impact of development on climate change and expects the proposals to be policy compliant. We are concerned that the preponderance of tall buildings will exacerbate the proposed development's carbon footprint.

