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25/11779/P Distillery 3 & 4 Broad Plain Bristol BS2 0JP

Hybrid application for site clearance and commercial development comprising: Full detailed approval for Distillery 3 (Glassfields Plot 1) for office use (Class E(c)(i), E(c)(ii) & E(g)(i)), public realm, landscaping, access, car parking, cycle storage, plant, machinery and other associated infrastructure. Outline planning permission with some matters reserved for the development of Distillery 4 (Glassfields Plot 3) for mixed use office (Class E(c)(i), E(c)(ii) & E(g)(i)) with ground floor flexible commercial use (Class E(b), E(c), E(d), E(g)(i) & Drinking Establishment (Sui Generis)). Approval sought for Access, layout, and landscaping.

Bristol Civic Society response, January 2026.

Response to revised and additional information posted on BCC website 16 December 2025.

Introduction

Bristol Civic Society reviewed the application drawings and supporting statements posted onto the BCC website in the period 17/04/25 – 08/05/25 following a meeting on site with the applicant. We submitted comments to the council on 12 August 2025.

The comments show that the society were supportive of the application but with some reservations. We hoped that these reservations would have been addressed in the submission of revised information posted on the BCC website on 16 December 2025. Unfortunately, this is not the case and amendments to the proposals included in the revised information give rise to further reservations.

Use and Layout

We welcomed the linkage through to the Soap Works and the view of the historic building but suggested that the view could be better by reducing the footprint of Building 4. The footprint of building 4 has not been altered and still impinges the view of the historic building.

We considered that the small underground car park worked well with the public space above, providing much needed disabled parking without reducing the landscaped public space. We note that the number of spaces to be provided is now reduced to ten (all disabled), however the change from underground to surface parking severely reduces the amount of public open space. This is a retrograde step, and we think a better solution would be to incorporate the ten required spaces adjacent to the west side of Building 4 and use the existing access through the archway in the Goldsmiths Building. This would bring added benefits by removing

the vehicle access from the end of Old Bread Street and replacing it with landscaping.

We note the Old Market Community Association comments posted on the BCC website on 14 January 2026 in relation to the car park and the new public open space. We support their comments that relocation of disabled parking spaces close to and at the same level as the entrance to building 3 is an important consideration for the users of the parking spaces. We also support their suggestions about reconfiguring the public open space to greatly increase the amount of usable space (grassed area) for recreation and the benefits this would bring to residents and office workers, both existing and future.

We await future proposals for the revival of the Printers Devil pub. We note that the description of the application includes ground floor flexible commercial use on the ground floor of building 4 including a drinking establishment. We would not want such a facility to replace the need to reactivate the pub, which is an important part of Bristol's history and past social life.

We note that the Public Art Officer refers to comments made in comments incorporated in the combined Urban Design response, but there is no such response on the website. We would reiterate our wish to see some art installation along the blank service areas on the Avon Street elevation.

Height, Scale and Massing

We note that the proposed height of Building 3 is unchanged and is indeed higher than the Assembly building on the opposite side of Temple Way when it should be the same height or lower, and more in keeping with the building opposite on the Avon Street corner and the Distillery 1 and 2 buildings. However, we do accept that a taller building in this location can be justified but should adhere to Bristol City Council's Urban living SPD guidance on prevailing height, and at the lower end of the height at best.

We cannot understand why it appears that no notice has been taken of City Design Groups comments that *'the proposal is deemed unfitting as the height, scale, form and massing (HSFM) of the proposal do not respond appropriately to the site's urban context and character, nor does the building deliver a tall building of exceptional quality or design as required'* and little effort seems to have been taken to address their damning comments. In our comments posted on BCC website 12/08/25 we suggested ways that the elevations could be improved to give the building a more distinctive and slenderer corner and reduce its mass as seen from Temple Way and Avon Street.

In our comments posted on BCC website 12/08/25 we noted our greater concern about Building 4 due to its height and relationship within the historic context. There is no change in the parameters noted on the revised drawings posted on the BCC website on 16 December 2025. The building breaks the skyline above the listed buildings on Broad Plain, thus being too tall and dominating the adjacent buildings. The initial comments we made at the pre-application stage regarding its relationship to the listed buildings still stand.

We note the Old Market Community Association comments posted on the BCC website on 14 January 2026 in relation to Building 4 and fully support their views about the height and footprint of the proposed building. We agree that the building 4 site is the ideal location for the residential elements granted in the extant outline permission (14/04959/P); it is shielded from traffic noise on all sides and is adjacent to the existing Christopher Thomas Court residential development. The northern side of the notional footprint would be further from the backs of the buildings on Broad Plain, and the building would be lower, which would remove our concerns set out above and previously that building 4 is too tall and dominates the adjacent buildings.

Conclusion

We are disappointed that the applicants have not looked again at items we have raised previously and trust that they will do so now, particularly in view of comments made by City Design Group and Old Market Community Association. We all need to work together to complete successful development of this important site so that it is a credit to Bristol and something that we can all be proud of now and for the future.