



an independent force for a better Bristol

Dear Avril

Stakeholder workshop – Monday 8th December 2014 – Bristol University – preliminary discussion about redevelopment of the site allocated to the rear and side of the former Children’s Hospital

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Thank you for inviting the Bristol Civic Society to this event.

The Society recognises that the University’s masterplan includes redevelopment of the land to the rear and to the east side of the former Children Hospital. It was exemplary for the University to include stakeholders in a discussion at the pre-options stage of the design. The Society acknowledges that the plans that Mike Keys showed were purely illustrative and produced to help our discussion.

The Society considers that the illustrations show three sensitive areas.

1. **The St. Michael’s Hill elevation** – a face on drawn elevation gives the worst possible impression of a new building behind the listed building. From ground level, the viewer in St. Michael’s Hill and Southwell Street would look at the new building from a lower angle and have a sense of regression. Nevertheless, the schematic section through the listed building and the new building illustrates the problem that we agreed the new design should avoid. The demolished wards behind the listed building created an agreeable rising succession of apron tiled roofs that sloped away from the viewer. Because the University requires the convenience of large floorplates, it is unlikely that solution is possible. The options that the Society suggests that the University should consider to avoid an abrupt cliff of new build above the ridge of the listed building would include a set back of one or more of the upper floors of the new building. Another option might be to create a court yard between the old and new buildings. The Society strongly supports the proposal to reuse the former hospital’s grand staircase to access the new building.
2. **The Royal Fort Road elevation** – the Society strongly supports the repair and retention of the historic rubble boundary wall. The masterplan speaks encouragingly of the University’s intention to ‘mend’ the street. The Society is concerned about the

impact that the lower side wall of the new building could create on St. Michael's Hill. The domestic buildings below Royal Fort Road step down the hill in plot widths. If the new building projects the height of the ridge of the listed building then, at Royal Fort Road the height of the new building could dominate St. Michael's Hill. To avoid repeating the effect of the Life Sciences building the Society suggests the design of the side elevation mitigates the height increase created by the falling contour. The Society was pleased that there would be windows in the end elevation.

3. **The grain and detail of the St. Michael's Hill and Royal Fort Road elevations** – the Society supports the principle that the detail of the new building should adopt the scale of the bays and respond to the detail of listed building.

Future public engagement – When the University is in a position to develop, the Society would like the University to show to the interested stakeholders the architect's preliminary sketches of possible design options. To see the design after the University decided its preferred option, is too late in the process.

John Frenkel
Convenor, Bristol Civic Society, Major Sites Group
0117 924 0853 johnfrenkel@blueyonder.co.uk