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The Society's statement in response to redevelop the former McArthur's Warehouse Gas Ferry Road

14<sup>th</sup> October 2016

### **Introduction**

The Society is grateful to the Guinness Partnership (Guinness) for the opportunity to comment on the first presentation of the latest attempt to redevelop and reuse of this long derelict building. The Society understands that the development remains at the concept stage and that any drawings show the outline of the mass of new building and not the form. The Society supports that proposal concurs with the Nash Partnership's SWOT analysis of the site and the development constraints and opportunities. Much of the content of this response is derived from the responses to the two preceding schemes. The Presentation Boards anticipate many of the Society's comments.

### **Demolition**

The Society reluctantly accepts demolition of the existing warehouse.

### **Change of use**

The Society accepts that a predominantly residential, mixed use scheme is appropriate in this location. The Society is pleased to note that Guinness appreciates the problems that would arise if new residential accommodation is built to the back of the dock. The scheme must not compromise the future use of the dry dock. Could the commercial space be built so as to create a buffer between the dock and new buildings?

The Society shares the concern of others about the protection of employment uses around the periphery of the dry dock. The scheme should offer simple, and therefore affordable, ground floor industrial units. The Society would prefer to see low cost industrial units built separately from the higher specification and cost of the residential blocks.

### **Mass**

Because of the intervening developments to the south and east of SS Great Britain, it is unrealistic to cite the building heights that the 1998 planning brief recommends. The Society does not support a roof ridge taller than the Great Western House. To exceed the height of the nearby developments would harm the views into the site and through the to the Clifton escarpment. A higher roof line would also harm the setting of the existing developments and fail to enhance or conserve the Docks Conservation Area. Alternatively, if

the Council accepts buildings in the centre of the site a floor taller than Great Western House, the building that is nearest to the Cumberland Road should be a storey lower to step down to the domestic building scale of Cumberland Road. The Society encourages roofs whose shape adds interest to the skyline and supports the provisional roof designs.

### **Design**

The Society supports informal blocks set at angles to each other, which add interest. The articulation and design of the elevation that faces Gas Ferry Road will be a critical factor. A long unbroken façade of the replacement building would compare unfavourably with the vigorous architectural invention and visual interest of the original warehouse.

### **Materials**

The Society has an open mind about the palette of materials if the materials reflect the dockside setting. If any of the original, deep terracotta bricks could be reused they could make an attractive feature.

### **Accommodation mix**

The scheme should offer a greater accommodation mix than one and two bedroom units. The developments at the East Purifier House and the Umberslade Wapping Warf development only offer a mix of single and two bedroom apartments. The Bristol General Hospital development is an example of a more creative accommodation mix. A greater mix of accommodation size will attract a greater range of purchasers and be more adaptable in the future. The Society assumes, given Guinness's objects that the development will provide policy compliant affordable housing.

### **Car parking**

The proposed podium would provide a convenient car park. The Society assumes that the development would avoid surface car parking on other parts of the site.

### **Public realm**

The Society notes that unlike the preceding schemes, the Guinness scheme intends to retain the whole area of the site as private space. The Society looks forward to the detailed proposals for the enhancement of the public realm particularly to the east and south of the site.