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The Society's response to pre-application presentation in respect of the proposed development of Moxy Hotel at 55-83 Newfoundland Way,

21st September 2015

Introduction

The Society thanks Vastint and its team for presenting the proposal to develop a Moxy hotel in Bristol. The Society is disappointed that the developer consulted the community so late in the planning process. Although the Society received assurances that the design of the scheme is not in its final form, it is difficult to see how any community contribution could alter the design six weeks before the submission of the planning application. The Society welcomes the redevelopment of this site, the demolition of the standing buildings and the change of use to an hotel. The development could enhance the district, create employment and generate additional economic returns.

Height and mass

The Society notes that the current proposal has a similar height and mass to the building permitted by the expired planning permission. The height and mass are both acceptable. If the building has a more shaped roof line, the Society would not object to a modest increase in height to accommodate the structure.

Design

The Society understands that the presentation boards represent the developer's first thoughts about the appearance of the exterior of the hotel. However, because the planning application is six weeks ahead, the architectural drawings must be in an advanced state. Unfortunately, the Society cannot support the proposed design, which falls short of the Council's design requirements set out in BCS21 and Policy DM29 - Design of New Buildings. This is an important site beside a gateway to Bristol. It is on the edge of the St. Paul's conservation area. The Newfoundland Way elevation would create a long unrelenting building. The lack of modulation of the building envelope would increase the hotel's perceived bulk, which the phase 2

extension would lengthen. The quality of the proposal's design contrasts to its disadvantage with surrounding buildings such as the multi-storey car park and Staples warehouse, which show carefully considered designs. The fenestration of the upper five floors has no horizontal hierarchy or vertical progression or recession. The elevation presents five rows of equally spaced windows without architectural detail or overall architectural composition. The proportion of each identical window expresses neither a vertical nor a horizontal rhythm. The presentation boards did not indicate the depth of the window reveals, which the Society suspects are shallow. Windows that lack recession flatten an elevation's appearance. The use of colour blocks fails to mitigate the lack of overall structural modulation.

The treatment of the roofscape and skyline are important to local views and distant views along Newfoundland Way. The proposed flat roof creates a straight, unrelieved roof line. The Society suggests that the developer considers an alternative roof structure. The Society refers to the requirements of DM29. A shaped roof covering that creates visual interest could enclose the roof plant and support photovoltaic panels. The roof of Staples warehouse on the other side of Newfoundland Road is in an example of a roof design incorporated in an unassuming industrial building.

The presentation boards refer to the surrounding architectural context, which includes Duke's Builders, a former cinema and an unlisted building of merit. There is no evidence that the local architectural contexts inform the design of the industrial standardised elevation or contribute positively to the area's character. The developer promotes its brand colour scheme. The presentation boards do not identify the materials of the elevations. The Society supports Policy DM29 that requires the use of high quality, durable and sustainable materials of an appropriate texture and colour.

There was no indication of the design of the Orange Street elevation. Currently, Orange Street represents an incoherently planned space. The area on the north side of the street is part of a fast improving area. St. Paul's is rapidly attracting a larger resident population. This development gives the opportunity to define the southern boundary to the street. The hotel's Orange Street entrance will be the principal entrance for staff and customers who will choose a secondary pedestrian route to walk to the city centre to avoid the Newfoundland Way traffic. The design must contain the waste storage facilities within the building.

Access and highways

If the Council has no overriding safety objection, the Society supports the proposed bus lay-by on Newfoundland Way and the reconfiguration of Orange Street. The development gives an opportunity to create shared space along Orange Street. The shared space design should appear to give pedestrian use dominance because service vehicle use of the street will be a minor use.