

## **22/06014/PREAPP – 40-46 ALBERT ROAD, BS2 0XA – BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY COMMENTS.**

### **The Proposal.**

Demolition of existing commercial buildings and erection of student accommodation with ground floor commercial uses.

### **Summary.**

The Society does not support the proposed development as it stands. We would wish to see a greater diversity of uses on the site in accordance with emerging policies. In our view, the proposal is too high and could thus have harmful implications in the immediate vicinity and on longer distance views particularly towards the Totterdown escarpment. Good public transport and cycling links to the city centre and, if student accommodation is included, to the main university campus should serve the site.

### **Land Uses.**

There is currently a mixture of uses on the site including a gym, electrical and paint stores all of which appear to be well used.

The Local Plan allocates this site as part of a principal industrial and warehouse area. The Local Plan Review states,

“St. Philip’s Marsh will include mixed uses including the provision new homes in a regenerated city quarter which complements the adjacent Bristol Temple Quarter. Development will ensure the retention, refurbishment, intensification and/or redevelopment and innovative reincorporation of workspace to ensure that the number of jobs supported by the area is increased and that the diversity of business and economic development is maintained and enhanced.”

Included in the mix of uses is a range of employment and commercial uses, new and affordable homes and student accommodation. Elsewhere in the Local Plan Review, Policy H7 states that student beds in St Philip’s Marsh should not exceed 700. The preapp site is located in the north west of St Philip’s Marsh where the Local Plan Review states,

“the location close to Bristol Temple Quarter is suitable for higher intensity workspace/offices and other more intensive forms of use appropriate to a location adjacent to the city centre. Development will include and facilitate enhanced connections to Bristol Temple Quarter and the city centre as a whole. Redevelopment and regeneration along the River Avon frontage will facilitate the creation of an enhanced multi-purpose greenway and accommodate any flood protection infrastructure required as part of the development of the area.”

St Philip’s marsh forms part of the Bristol Temple Quarter Development Framework which is at a consultation stage at present. Policies have yet to be confirmed but there are aspirational themes of creating mixed use communities and creating new employment and business spaces that increase and diversify jobs in the area.

Although the proposal contains a small element of commercial floorspace, it is predominantly a development for purpose built student accommodation. The developers indicated that the

proposal would provide around 460 student bedrooms and generate 45 jobs compared with 15 at present. The Society considers that the proposal misses the opportunity modernise and diversify job opportunities. A mix of uses less dominated by student accommodation and providing more commercial space, particularly for newer industries, would be preferable and more consistent with emerging policies for the area. The proposal would take a considerable proportion of the maximum of 700 student beds suggested in the Local Plan Review and must be considered in the context of other large developments for student accommodation in the vicinity. It is important that a balanced community is encouraged in St Philip's Marsh.

### **Height and Impact.**

As it stands, the building would comprise a cruciform shape with the highest element being c16 storeys and the lowest c7storeys. The Society is concerned that the height of this proposal would encourage high buildings on this side of Albert Road extending south from the tall student accommodation building under construction at the junction with Feeder Road to this site. High buildings are being considered for the west side of the River Avon and we are concerned that the river at this point could be largely enclosed in a canyon of tall buildings. This would not seem to be consistent with the Local Plan Review's desire to achieve an enhanced, multi-purpose greenway on the river frontage. We are also concerned about the harmful impact the proposal would have on views towards the Totterdown escarpment. The view on page 47 of the preapp document demonstrates this. Views agreed with the City Council are needed to test the impact of the proposal much more fully.

### **Public Realm.**

The Society does not have strong views on the public realm at this stage. It is clear from this response that we would wish to see a different approach to developing this site. As a matter of principle, we would support public access to open space created in addition to private areas of open space. We have also observed an excessive amount of tagging on the riverside path. This should be taken into consideration in public realm proposals with a view to eliminating it as much as possible.

### **Transport.**

The Local Plan Review states that development in this part of St Philip's Marsh will include and facilitate enhanced connections to Bristol Temple Quarter and the city centre as a whole. That approach is supported by the Society and, in particular, public transport and cycling connections to the main university campus as well as the new campus in Temple Quarter should flow from the development if student accommodation comprises a significant part of it.

### **Climate Change.**

The Society supports the Council's drive towards a zero carbon city and expects all major new developments to be policy compliant in respect of this.