

BRISTOL URBAN DESIGN FORUM

Bristol Urban Design Forum

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For the attention of Jo Davis

10 October 2017

Dear Jo,

**Re: Bristol Urban Design Forum - Design Review on 26 September 2017
Review No. 17/04346/PREAPP – Little Paradise, Bristol**

Thank you for bringing this bold scheme to the Panel for review on 26th September. You will appreciate that the Panel has reviewed neighbouring schemes and so have a good understanding of the issues associated with this site.

It is recognised that this area provides a good opportunity to build to higher densities to bring vitality to the failing East Street and to create a revitalised central neighbourhood to the benefit of all.

You informed the Panel that Dandara, had successfully developed PRS schemes in other cities and places and that this is the company's first venture into the Bristol market.

Your architect, Stephen Hodder, carefully explained how it was possible to build good quality urban housing to create appropriate 'active' street frontage and sheltered outdoor spaces for the enjoyment of residents. He also proposed a 22-storey tower of apartments, which he explained is intended to form a "cluster" with the 17-storey consented scheme at St Catherines Place and a scheme currently being designed for Plot 5 (former Pring & St. Hill site).

The Panel welcomed the scheme in general, recognising that it represented good urban design thinking, though there were some aspects that would benefit from greater attention. These included the relationship with the adjacent sheltered housing, which is dwarfed and overshadowed in the early morning and would certainly be overlooked by this scheme.

Furthermore, there is a blank façade immediately opposite windows of the existing housing. There was discussion about the merits and value of altering the layout of your scheme to better address this sheltered scheme. In this context, we discussed the scope to create a high-quality pedestrian priority (shared-space) tree-lined street (Little Paradise) to the benefit of residents on both sides and ensuring a safe and attractive link to East Street for pedestrians and cyclists.

BRISTOL URBAN DESIGN FORUM

Equally opportunities should be exploited to do the same on Stafford Street, Leicester Street and Mill Lane to create an equally elegant connection to East Street. The Panel consider these interventions important in mitigating the negative aspects of high-density residential development.

The relationship to Malago Road also should be positive in setting a strong precedent for frontage generating an appropriately scaled urban street connecting East Street to North Street via Sheene Road. The context for this is the ambition to make this a high-quality residential area. We would here reiterate the advice of the Panel given in relation to the Pring and St Hill site, as follows.

... in absence of a coherent and agreed masterplan for Bedminster Green we have serious reservations about the consequences of considering applications on a piecemeal basis. We particularly urge all parties to develop a strategy for the highway that coordinates all modes of transport, public utilities and tree planting in order to ensure that the original masterplan's objective of 'strengthening the spine' can be successfully delivered.

Regarding the tower, the Panel had concerns about the form and location of this. Your architect's argument about a random height cluster of towers was not convincing. When the Panel reviewed the St Catherines tower the comment was that, "your team should be encouraged to devise an appropriate design to ensure that the buildings are seen as a landmark and perhaps a lasting symbol of the regeneration of the area."

It was the view of the Panel that this would be a distinctive 'beacon' rather than one of a collection of towers. Additionally, the Panel advised that the orientation of the new tower should be reconsidered to reduce overshadowing and to provide a more equal share of sunlight into each of the tower apartments.

The context of any proposed tower should be carefully considered in the light of drawn evidence that agreed viewpoints had been tested, particularly in relation to the impact on views of some of the nearest neighbours on Windmill Hill. Such studies should show a clear understanding of the impact of over-shadowing and overlooking and, as above, steps should be taken to improve the design and orientation to lessen this impact, particularly, though not exclusively, over your own development.

In summary, then, the Panel welcomed the opportunity to consider the design at this relatively early stage and would suggest the following points to be considered in taking the scheme forward:

1. The form and massing of the development should be further considered to reduce any negative impacts on the neighbouring developments or indeed units within your own scheme.
2. The tower block should be lower in height than the consented 17-storey scheme on the adjacent St Catherine's Place development. It should be subject to careful and thorough impact analysis and should justify itself by being of the highest quality of design and materials.
3. The streetscape, including the immediate frontage, especially at street level should be carefully considered in detail to enhance the adjacent streets. Noting that the strong, white, horizontal emphasis of the proposed elevations presents a harsh contrast to the smaller scale, fenestration of the surrounding streetscapes.
4. The limited amount of open space should be carefully and richly designed to ensure maximum benefit for residents within and adjacent to the new development.
5. Direct connections to East Street should be enhanced for the benefit of all local users.

BRISTOL URBAN DESIGN FORUM

The Panel trust that this advice will assist your team in bringing forward an exemplary scheme that can serve to inform best practice in high-density living, appropriate for this promising location so close to local amenities and to the city centre.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G.N. Haslam". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Geoffrey Haslam Dip Arch, ARB. FRSA. AoU

Chair, Bristol Urban Design Forum Design Review Panel

cc: Bristol City Council Planning
BUDF website