

BRISTOL URBAN DESIGN FORUM

Bristol Urban Design Forum

c/o The Architecture Centre
Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA

Tel: 0117 922 1540

Email:

budf@architecturecentre.org.uk

www.budf.org.uk

Tetlow King Planning
Unit 2 Eclipse Office Park
High Street
Staple Hill
Bristol BS16 5EL

For the attention of Andy Moger

10 October 2017

Dear Andy,

**Re: Bristol Urban Design Forum - Design Review on 26 September 2017
Review No. 17/04255/PREAPP – Silverthorne Lane, Bristol**

Thank you for bringing this scheme to the Panel for review on 26th September. The Panel were pleased to be asked to review the scheme at this stage in its development.

There is no doubt this is an interesting area to consider undertaking a bold development. The context includes a number of major strategic developments also within the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and close to this site, which, over time, will dramatically transform the fortunes of the area and could create a new vibrant mixed-use quarter for the city. Furthermore, there is clearly defined housing need in the city. A site such as this being so close to Temple Meads Station could contribute to the vitality of the whole area.

Your architect presented some of the challenges of the site and clearly explained his thought process in evolving the final layout. This avoided developing close to the listed building, maximised the waterfront opportunity and exploited the site features, such as the canal loading inlet. Furthermore, he explained that he had carefully observed the many historic architectural and engineering features displayed in the existing structures on and around the site. The suggestion of creating a ferry stop adjacent to the site was welcomed as was the proposal for restaurant/café (A3) use at ground level and offices, in addition to a large (60%) proportion of housing.

Whereas this was clear and understandable, the Panel agreed that it was not entirely the right strategy for this site.

Firstly, the Panel were concerned that a full site appraisal was lacking. Such an exercise should look at the wider area, including transport and “active” travel connections and views, etc. through and around the site. This would also identify key features such as the sun-path across the site, which is important in designing residential property and take account of the challenges such as the hostile nature of Silverthorne Lane itself. The design should then evolve from this site appraisal and seek to both maximise the opportunities and address the challenges. The Panel were also concerned about the “pastiche” nature of the architecture proposed and considered a fresh, innovative but responsive approach could be taken.

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Hence, the Panel agreed that to build a high block along the waterfront was not an appropriate approach as it limited views and created overshadowing for the entire remainder of the site.

Furthermore, buildings adjoining the western elevation of the listed building, would better reflect the nature of the previous development on the site, and potentially add to density. Development to the northern side and with blocks in a north/south arrangement could also limit overshadowing.

The Spatial Framework calls for streetscape improvements, green infrastructure and enhanced biodiversity. This should include a careful appraisal of the accessibility and visual appearance of the adjacent foot bridge and improvements be considered.

Views to and from Temple Meads should be prepared from key (agreed) points to demonstrate any impact on the Grade 1 listed structure.

The Panel agreed that a fresh look at the deployment of built form on the site could achieve great benefit with the following advantages:

- The protection of views in (e.g. to the listed building) and out to the waterside for all residents
- The introduction of sunlight to all apartments.
- The creating of a “place” that could become a destination such as a waterside square surrounded by bars, restaurants and workplaces.

To ensure this is achieved the Panel recommends the following.

1. A thorough site appraisal including a clear understanding of the impacts and opportunities as seen in the wider context.
2. The scheme should positively change the character of the area
3. Visual and physical connections from the whole site should be maximised
4. The amenity value of the footbridge to be improved
5. “Active travel” connections to Temple Meads to be incorporated
6. The architectural response could be more contemporary to good effect
7. Outlook should be in the round to improve views from the whole site and sunlight penetration, as a key driver should be maximised. It is recognised that this may impact on the quantum of development; it should improve the quality of the scheme
8. The permeability of the site and access for the public should be re-appraised and maximised. For instance, the relationship between the existing footpath on the eastern boundary of the site and the boundary treatment of the scheme should result in active frontages, natural surveillance, improved environment and the potential for increased permeability
9. Roofscape is important and the upper parts of the building generally should create interest both close up and from a distance. Equally the ground level should be designed to maximise active frontages, natural surveillance, etc.

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10. Introduction of planting and green infrastructure and the promotion of biodiversity

In summary, the Panel advises that this site offers the opportunity to develop an exemplary scheme that can set an excellent precedent for the C21, which can positively influence other schemes that succeed it and would be pleased to further review the scheme as it progresses

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G.N. Haslam". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Geoff Haslam
Chair, Bristol Urban Design Forum Design Review Panel

cc: Bristol City Council Planning
BUDF website