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The Society's response to the proposal to redevelop Queen Victoria House, Redland Hill.

12 December 2014

The Society is grateful to Pegasus Life and their agents for holding a public exhibition of their proposals on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014. It is best practice for a developer to hold a public engagement event at the pre-options stage of a design. The Society acknowledges that the plans on the display boards were purely illustrative and produced to aid discussion.

#### **Change of use**

The Society supports the concept of this development. Further commercial use is unlikely and conversion to residential use would prevent this prominent building falling into disuse and decay. Accommodation of the type proposed is as an important addition to Bristol's housing stock as any other form of residential accommodation. This would be a high sustainable site for assisted living.

#### **Height and mass**

The Society supports the proposal that the work to repair the exterior and remove later accretions from the building, which is an unlisted building of merit. The interior would be sympathetically converted and restored. The Society agrees that the site could support the development of two additional blocks to the east of the principal building. The Society's principal concern would be the height of the upper block of the two new blocks. The new block must be subservient to the principal building, which means that the top of the new building must be lower than that of the principal building. From the exhibition sketches, it was not possible to compare the height of the new block to the principal block but the Society suspects that the new block is one floor too high. The height of the second new block does not cause a similar concern because it would be further down the slope of the falling site.

#### **Design**

The following comments are not a criticism of the exhibition sketches. The Society acknowledges that the scheme has not advanced beyond the options stage and our comments probably follow the views that the developer and architects have already considered. The Society would like to see the new blocks contribute to the roofscape actively. It may be possible to produce interesting shapes to support and PV panels that the development includes. The Society understands that the high ratio of void to wall shown in

the exhibition sketches is unlikely to translate into the final design. The Society would like to see the vertical bays that would articulate the new blocks refer to the vertical bays of the principal building. Similarly, the Society hopes that the architectural details of the new blocks responds to the scale of the details of the principal building.

### **Public realm**

The Society welcomes the conservation gain that the restoration of Queen Victoria House will bring. The extension of the garden is fortunate. The proposed management plan will ensure the maintenance of these private gardens, which will be a public benefit. The Society looks forward to the development of these proposals, which will include further details of the front of the house facing Redland Hill and the management of traffic and parking within the site.