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The Society's statement in response to planning application - Carriageworks and Westmoreland House - 14/05930/F

Demolition of Westmoreland House and .4 Ashley Road, partial demolition, alteration and renovation of the Carriageworks building providing non-residential accommodation and 118 residential and creation of new public realm, new communal landscape garden areas, bio-diverse roofs, roof gardens, disabled car parking, servicing and access.

5th January 2015

The Society supports these development proposals. It responds only from the point of view of the impact of the physical appearance of the scheme on the public realm. The Society will not comment on the scheme's viability, the provision of affordable homes, the mix of accommodation, and mix of tenure. The Council has policies that it will apply to those aspects of the scheme.

Planning history

The Society has had a long involvement with this problem site; it has opposed all earlier redevelopment schemes. The Society participated in the Council's public consultation organised before obtaining compulsory purchase powers to redevelop the site with its preferred development partner, Knightstone Housing Association. The Society's sole aim is to see the removal of this negative landscape feature, the site redeveloped and brought back into social and economic use. The Society supports neither developer.

Demolition

The Society accepts the developer's demolition schedule; it be delighted to see the Westmoreland House tower demolished, which would be a major conservation gain.

Change of use

The Society supports the proposed uses for the site.

Mass and height

The mass and height of the new buildings are acceptable in this location.

Design and materials

The Society was pleased to note the evolution of the design following the earlier public consultation. The Society supports the interior planning of the site and the outward facing elevations. The Society suggests the recovery of the Carriagework's surviving window frames to enable their reproduction in an appropriate modern material. The purpose of the comments about the exterior elevations is constructive.

The Society remains concerned about aspects of the design. There are many poor examples of building design in the area. The aim of the new policy BCS21 is to improve the quality of the design of new buildings. This development will have a major impact on Stokes Croft and has the potential to be the catalyst for the next stage in the area's recovery. The success of the restoration of the Grade II* listed Carriageworks will depend on the quality of the detail of the restored window glazing structures and the design of an historically accurate mansard roof and dormers. Similarly, while a background building in Stokes Croft is appropriate it will nevertheless be flanked by the Grade II* listed Carriageworks and by Tuckett's Buildings. Tuckett's Buildings are unlisted buildings of merit with a high quality brick, street elevation. The detailing must be of high quality as must the materials of the new building.

Traffic issues

The Society welcomes the developer's agreement to the Council's request for a city centre development without parking, which solves many of the problems that the new entrance onto Ashley Road would create.

Public art

The Society welcomes the proposal to develop public art in consultation with the local community. The developer knows that the City Museum holds a core collection of Godwin furniture and of his connection with Ellen Terry and members of the Aesthetic Movement. Incorporation of these aspects of Godwin's life could create a greater interest in the development beyond the immediate marketing advantage.

Permeability

The Society supports the proposed permissive pedestrian shortcut through the site from Ashley Road to Stokes Croft.



The derelict site



Architect's image of the proposed scheme

