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an independent force for a better Bristol

Response to - 16/02662/PREAPP - Refurbishment of West Purifier House and Engine House (Grade II Listed) for residential use.

6th June 2016

Introduction

The Society supports the long delayed development of this important derelict site. The cluster of the two purifier sites and Gas Ferry Lane are a major heritage, which together with Capricorn Quay can relieve the bland Crest Nicholson master plan. The Society supports the construction of a new building to the east of the site. There are elements of the massing and of the design that the Society does not support for which it suggests improvements. The 2011 planning permission 11/03266/F is a material consideration as is the design of the completed development of the East Purifier House.

Change of use

If the Council accepts the developer's submission that residential use is more suited to the site than the current undeveloped commercial use, the Society would agree.

Height and mass

- i. **The Grade II listed Purifier House West.** The Society infers from the lack of mention of development proposals for the listed building that it is the developer's intention to respect the design of the redeveloped Purifier House East. There is a strong argument that the alterations to two listed structures should be similar.
- ii. **The new building.** The office block in the unbuilt permission was for three floors above a ground floor plus a pitched roof. The current application is for five floors above ground. The proposal substitutes for the gable and pitched roof of the consented scheme a full floor of accommodation plus a penthouse floor on top. The greater built mass roof would harm the setting of the listed Purifier House West, which would become subsidiary to the new building. The proposal would conflict with the planning guidance given by Historic England for development within the setting of a listed building and to the Council's design guide – responding to local character. The height of the consented scheme 11/03266/F should determine the envelope of the new building. The Society notes that the new built Boat House beside the Purifier House East is three floors above a ground floor and is subsidiary to the listed structure.

Design

The Society suggests that when the design is developed it should include a pitched roof as was included in permission 11/03266/F. In this setting BCS21 requires high quality design, which implies a design informed by the dominant local architectural characteristics; the pitched roofs of the two Purifier Houses.

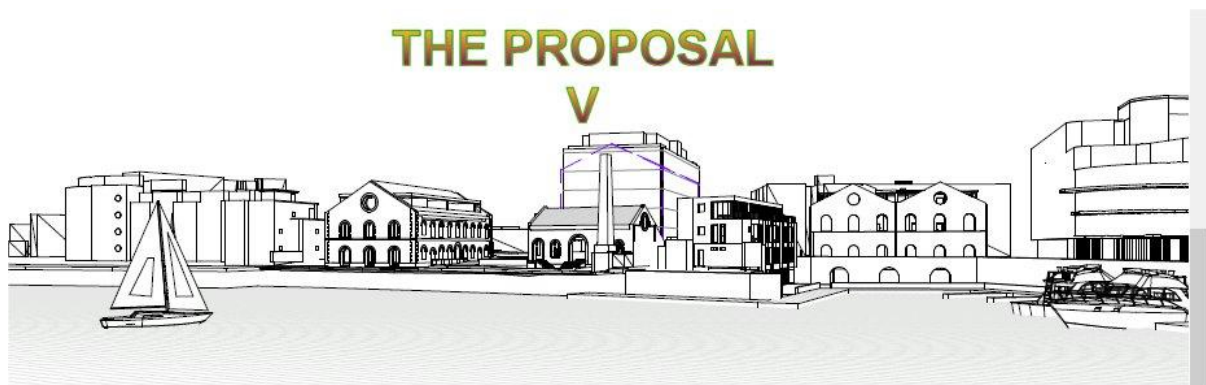
The Society has questions the housing mix. The development would add to the oversupply of small flats in the centre of the city. A larger proportion of bigger flats would reduce the car parking requirement. The Society does not support the developer's argument to support an exception to the Council's affordable housing policy.

Materials

The Society suggests that when the design is developed it should include materials of the same quality as those included in permission 11/03266/F to reflect the quality of the materials in the surrounding heritage buildings. The quality of the materials used to pave the courtyard area is equally important.

The landscape

- i. The Society is unconvinced by the argument to support a breach the boundary wall to create a new entrance onto Anchor Road. During the planning process that preceded the consented scheme, considerable attention was given to the value of the surrounding wall. It was considered necessary to maintain the integrity of the wall, which forms a substantial element of the character of the site. The former gateway into Gas Ferry Road was grandly conceived with substantial gateposts and wrought iron gates. The Society is also unpersuaded of the advantage of creating a view through the site to Anchor Road from the Harbourside Walk. The foremost character of the area is of an enclosed industrial space. The through view a car park would harm the spirit of the place.
- ii. The enclosed area in the centre of the site is dominated by the unattractive hard landscape of the car park. The division of the central space into a functional car park and an attractive amenity space requires further consideration.
- iii. It is unclear how the development will signify the separation of the private amenity space from the public space of the Harbourside Walk and the cyclepath. This aspect of the plan remains ill-defined.



THE PROPOSAL V

