



an independent force for a better Bristol

17th July 2017

The Society's response to the public consultation about proposed Bristol University – New Temple Meads Quarter Campus

Introduction

The Society strongly supports the proposal by the University with the support of the Council to develop a new science led campus on these derelict sites in the Enterprise Zone. This response sets out the Society's concerns. The Society anticipates that the matters considered have already been discussed between the University the Council and other parties. The Society also recognises that the masterplan is at an early stage and will continue to evolve.

Architecture

The east side of the river may be an appropriate site for tall buildings. The Society assumes that the Council has discussed with the University suitable viewpoints for the tall buildings assessment. The prominence in the Enterprise Zone and the importance of this development requires exemplary architecture. The architecture should set a standard that represents the ambition of planning policy BCS21 - Quality Urban Design. The tallest building gives an opportunity to create an internationally recognised symbol of the University and the City's aspirations; an image that and University and the City are proud to reproduce in their publicity. A design to match the Wills Tower would be impressive.

The Council has policies to encourage the production of sustainable heat and power. The Island may also be a suitable location for a local heat and power generation centre.

Conservation

The Society would like to see the Campus repair and reuse the Cattle Market Tavern. Currently, this building is in poor repair and is unlisted. However, it is an interesting building that is soundly constructed from good quality materials. It stands on a corner of the site and could provide an attractive use ancillary to the Campus. It would provide local character and its individual quality, set alongside a massive modern development, It would create an individual statement on a human scale, a blend of the old and new in the spirit recommended in the Enterprise Zone Spatial Framework.

Residential provision

The Society understands that the Campus will accommodate around 5,000 new students. The Society has not seen a projection of the number of academic and non-academic staff who will work on the campus. In recent years the University has expanded continuously and left the market to provide accommodation for its expanding population. Despite the growth of privately managed student halls of residence this laissez faire policy has damaged the local housing market. There is political disquiet. In some areas student houses in multiple occupation have reached a level where they have removed a substantial number of family homes from the housing stock and harmed the balance of local communities. The Society is pleased to note that the new Campus will provide residential accommodation. What percentage of the new student population will the Campus house? The presentation documents contain no detail. The new wave of academic staff will also look for homes in a City that continues to suffer serious house price inflation. The Society proposes a housing impact assessment in relation to both the incoming student and staff accommodation demand.

An associated issue, which the University's development team must have already considered, is the provision of soft infrastructure for a community that will be larger than that of many towns. The Society assumes that there will be space available for retail, medical services and children's nurseries. This will be a largely graduate community.

Public realm

At this stage in the planning process it is probably unfair to criticise the lack of detail about the proposals for the public realm. These are some important questions for the development to resolve:

- (i) Will the University build a bridge to link the west bank of the Floating Harbour to Avon Street and Silverthorne Lane?
- (ii) Will the University rebuild the lock gates between the Floating Harbour and the Feeder to reinstate Lock Bridge circulation?
- (iii) Will the University build or contribute to the proposed new south entrance to Temple Meads Station?
- (iv) Will the University build or contribute to the construction and/or improvement of the shared cycle/pedestrian routes and pedestrian paths that it indicates in the Temple Quarter Plan?

In the Society's view, any developer contributions that result from the Campus development should be invested in improvement of the waterways, their retaining walls and public waterside access.

Highways

The Society anticipates that the University and Council have discussed this issue and that the University has a draft travel plan. There will be widespread public concern about the substantial peak time traffic that the Campus will generate. The University should publish information to clarify its proposals to address this issue as soon as possible. The local road network is at capacity during peak hours. Unless the Council is prepared to make a difficult political decision to restrict traffic along the Bath and Wells radial routes there is no more scope to improve their traffic flow. The presentation documents contain no information about the

University's plans to manage this problem. There is great local concern about the impact on day-time parking in Totterdown and the Bath Road.

Planning framework for future public space

The public realm on the island must be considered in the wider landscape of the whole of the Enterprise Zone of which it forms an important element. Improving connectivity within the Zone must be the priority. An earlier iteration of the Arena scheme included a pedestrian bridge to link the Arena to the Station. The construction of a new pedestrian/cycling bridge over the Avon to link the Island to Cattle Market Road and the wider Enterprise Zone should be considered by the Council and the University at this stage in the planning process. New surfaces and street furniture should be of high quality. The public realm should include pocket park(s) to green the heavily trafficked area and contribute to a sense of place.

Public transport

The failing of this site is that there is no concentration of bus services. An inadequate bus service is a weakness of the whole Enterprise Zone. The Society assumes that the University and the Council may have discussed the improvement of services with local bus companies. The Society knows that it is an ambition of First Bus to open a new service that runs from east to west Bristol through the Enterprise Zone.