



an independent force for a better Bristol

29th December 2017

Land off Former Post Office Depot Cattle Market Road – 17/06459/P

The proposal

Outline application for a new mixed-use University Campus to comprise of up to 82,395sq m of floor space including up to 1,500 student beds with all matters reserved except access.

Introduction

The Society supports the proposed new campus and has attended and responded to both of pre-planning presentations. The Society is encouraged to see that the planning boundary is extended to include the Totterdown Basin and Cattle Market Road. A partnership with the neighbouring landowners, the Council and Network Rail is critical to the scheme's success. The Society recognises that the masterplan will continue to evolve.

Demolition

The Society is disappointed that the University is not prepared to encourage the Council to spare the former Cattle Market Tavern from demolition and to incorporate it into the scheme. The Council and the University will be familiar with the strong conservation arguments. The former tavern stands on a corner of the site and could provide an attractive ancillary use and give provide local character set alongside a massive modern development. The Tavern 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.

Change of use and the residential provision

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, damaged local traders financially in the dead vacation trading periods and harmed the

balance of local communities. The Society is pleased to note that the new Campus will provide residential accommodation. The filed documents contain no details of the percentage of the new student population that the Campus will house. The additional academic staff will look for homes in a City that continues to suffer serious house price inflation. The Society suggest to the Council that the University should provide a housing impact assessment in relation to both the incoming student and staff accommodation demand.

Height, mass and architecture

The Society is neutral about the proposal to construct tall buildings. The east side of the river may be an appropriate site for tall buildings. The Society notes that the Council and University have agreed University suitable viewpoints to assess the impact of the tall buildings. The Society was heartened by the University's commitment to deliver high quality architecture. We do not wish to revisit past controversies, but some buildings commissioned by the University within the last generation have fallen below the University's stated design ambition. 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 group of new buildings could create an impressive entry to the city from the railway.

An associated issue, which the University's development team must have 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.

Planning framework for future public space

The Society welcomes the provision of access to a future connection to Temple Meads Station and the detailed proposals set out in Part 4 of the masterplan to create exterior recreation areas on both the Cattle Market and the Island sites. 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. The Society is unclear whether the construction of the new Avon Street foot/cycling bridge and the reinstatement of the footpath over the Totterdown Lock are agreed projects. Circulation to the east would be compromised if either of these points of access are not included development's first phase.

Transport and public realm

Highways

There is widespread public concern about the substantial peak time traffic that the Campus could generate. The local road network is at capacity during peak hours. Unless the Council is prepared to make a difficult political decision to restrict traffic long the Bath and Wells radial routes there is no more scope to improve their traffic flow. There is local concern about the

impact on day-time parking in Totterdown and the Bath Road. The practical effect of the University's car-free development will transfer parking to local roads.

Rail

Although the Campus borders Temple Meads Station that connection only links the Campus to areas that the railway serves, hence the importance of access by other modes.

Bus routes

The failing of this site is that there is no concentration of bus services. The proposed bus service to the Cattle Market drop-off point would only serve other University sites. Despite the confident contrary assertion of BurroHappold's Transport Statement, the bus service is a weakness of the whole Enterprise Zone. The Society assumes that the University and the Council will 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.

The Society would welcome information about the University's discussions with the Council's Traffic Department and bus operators about new routes that could serve the campus in the context of the larger Enterprise Zone. The Society has continuously raised this important public issue.

Cattle Market Road Cycle route

The Society questions whether the cycle route that goes behind the bus stop is the best proposal. At peak hours, it would create conflict with the pedestrian desire line.

Continuous pavements

The Society suggests that the University should adopt the widely recognised practice of designating a continuous pavement and cycle route where they cross the mouth of the vehicle access route to indicate priority.

Temple Meads Station – new south entrance

When the new entrance opens, there will be high volumes of pedestrians at certain times. The University's preferred route for pedestrians walking from the new entrance to Brock's Bridge would be to lead them towards Totterdown Basin past the harbourside retail/cafe in building CM4. To attract pedestrians away from the wider Cattle Market Road route the design should make the Campus route appear the natural path to Brock's Bridge. The steps along the campus route could be a disincentive to pedestrians.