

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Section 62A Planning Submission - Authorities in Special Measures

Proposed Demolition and Re-Development at: 2-5 Highland Square, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2YB

On behalf of the applicant, this letter accompanies a Full Planning Application for the redevelopment of the above site. The proposed development is described as follows:

'Demolition of buildings and clearance of site; redevelopment to provide a retained 4-bedroom HMO and 4no. self-contained flats (Use Class C3) within a two-storey building, with altered access and provision of refuse and cycle storage.'

It is supported by the following documents and plans:

- Application form and ownership certificate
- Site location plan;
- CIL Form 1: Additional Information
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- Phase 1 Assessment of Land Quality - Ground Investigation Ltd
- Marketing Letter - CSquared;
- Heritage Design and Access Statement – Aspect360/105 West Architects
- Sustainability & Energy Assessment – Building Energy Experts; and
- Existing & proposed plans – 105 West Architects.

The Site

The site is situated on the south-western side of Highland Square, within the residential neighbourhood of Clifton. The Square lies a short distance from Whiteladies Road, a principal shopping street and thoroughfare. The surrounding context is characterised by streets lined with period buildings, the majority of which are two- to three-storey residential dwellings.

The site itself is fully developed and comprises three late-19th century buildings that have been extensively adapted and interconnected. Historically, the ground floor was occupied by a car repair garage with ancillary office accommodation at first-floor level. The front elevation is defined by three large entrances with roller shutter doors, each providing access to individual workshop bays served by dropped kerbs and crossovers from the road. A separate entrance door on the frontage provides access to the upper floor, where there is a self-contained house in multiple occupation (HMO) with four bedrooms.

Although the garage use has now relocated elsewhere, the owner continues to maintain a presence on site, primarily as a deterrent against potential squatters.

Further details relating to the site are provided within the accompanying Heritage, Design & Access Statement.

Planning History

The council's Planning Register records a number of applications relating to the site. Of note are a 2004 refusal of planning permission for extensions over existing commercial garage to form 2 No. self-contained, 5 bedroom residential

units of accommodation at first and second floor level and then in 2006 planning permission that was granted for replacement windows

In January 2023, a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use and Development (CLEUD) was issued by the council establishing the fact an existing house in multiple occupation at no.2 was lawful (ref. 23/01427/CE).

Planning Policy Context

The site is located within Bristol's urban area and there are no specific land use designations directly associated with it, however, the townscape and landscape setting are key attributes that justify the area being part of the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area. There no listed buildings or other heritage assets in close proximity of the site.

According to the Government's Flood Map for Planning, the site is within Flood Zone 1 where there is a low probability of flooding. Similarly, there are no surface water issues affecting the site. The Coal Authority mapping shows the site is not within a 'Development High Risk Area'.

The Proposed Development

It is proposed to demolish the buildings, clear the site and construction a 2-storey single block within which will be a replacement 4-bed house in multiple and 4no. apartments. A schedule of proposed accommodation is included in the Heritage, Design & Access Statement.

The proposals include the removal of the crossovers that serve the workshops and make good the footway. In doing so, there is scope to increase the Residents' Parking Zone bays at the front of the property

Planning Assessment

Land Use

The car repair garage falls within the Use Class B2 (General Industrial) category of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). The use has taken place since the early 1970s up until March 2022 when the business relocated to Avonmouth. The occupiers had outgrown the accommodation and because of changes in MOT testing requirements, they were no longer able to provide the testing at the premises, a significant portion of their business. The residential accommodation has however continued to be occupied by tenants.

Upon the commercial garage substantially relocating, the site was subject to marketing by commercial property agents CSquared with two campaigns taking place. These included a site board, advertisement on various web sites and distribution of marketing literature. Further details of the process and response to the marketing is provided in the report provided by CSquared. Whilst some initial interest was received, no proceedable offers were made and the owners have been unable to find tenants.

The car repair garage and 'B2' use was a low employment generator, is a noise nuisance and on occasion led to vehicle congestion within the Square. The premises, are in a generally poor condition and the appearance of the buildings are at best neutral in terms of their contribution to the conservation area. The loss of the commercial use would not in this case be considered important in terms of either the quality or quantity of employment floorspace that is available.

In terms of planning policy and in respect of employment land, Policy BCS8 Delivering a Thriving Economy states that employment land outside the city's Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas will be retained where it makes a valuable contribution to the economy and employment opportunities. It states that retaining valuable employment land is an important part of the council's strategy, as it helps to maintain the city's diverse economic base by ensuring a wide variety of business spaces of different types, sizes, quality and cost.

Bristol's Development Management Policy DM12 Retaining Valuable Employment Sites acknowledges that 'retaining these sites helps to provide employment and business opportunities close to where people live' but then sets out certain circumstances that allow for the change of employment land to other uses.

The first of these is criterion is that 'There is no demand for employment uses.' In this case, the marketing undertaken has demonstrated there is no realistic demand for the continued commercial use of the premises and as such, the

proposal to redevelop the site complies with the policy. Redeveloping the site would address the environmental impacts associated with the use and activities that previously took place.

In looking at the potential of the site, Core Strategy Policy BCS20 Effective and Efficient Use of Land states that development should maximise opportunities to re-use previously developed land, particularly in and around the city centre, in order to promote higher densities of development. Given the character of the area and proximity to the Whiteladies Road Town Centre and public transport, a higher density would appear appropriate for the site, so long as it is in keeping with the character of the area.

Development Management Policy DM1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development states that when considering development proposals a positive approach will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Developing the site with residential use would be sustainable given the character of the area and prevailing residential context. The proximity to local shops and services, transport and employment opportunities weigh in favour of the development. The proposal is wholly in accordance with the Government's agenda for growth as set out in the NPPF as it will bring investment into the area.

Policy BCS5 of the Core Strategy identifies a need for 30,600 homes within Bristol between 2006 and 2026. A key objective of the Council's housing policy is to maintain a range and mix of housing types across the city. BCS18: Housing Type seeks to ensure that new residential development provides for a range of housing types to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. Core Strategy Policy BCS20: Effective and Efficient Use of Land promotes development that will maximise opportunities to re-use previously developed sites, in order to promote higher densities of development. The proposed development accords with these principles by providing a range of accommodation that is designed to ensure a high level of amenity for the future occupiers.

Design and Conservation

The existing buildings have limited merit and are of no special interest. On this basis there should be no barrier to them being demolished and replaced with a suitable alternative. The proposed development is for a sustainable building that has enduring qualities and accommodation that will make it a desirable place to live. The design approach seeks to positively respond to prominence of the site and its constraints and opportunities by creating a built form and notable architecture.

Core Strategy Policy BCS22 Conservation and the Historic Environment seeks to safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance. Given the nature of the proposals they will preserve the setting of the character of the conservation area. As such, the proposals are deemed to be policy compliant.

Development Policy DM31 Heritage Assets cross-references to Policy BCS22 and seeks to ensure development proposals preserve, and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets or their setting. Under the heading Conserving heritage assets, the following expectations are listed:

- i. Demonstrate that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and*
- ii. Demonstrate that the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset; and*
- iii. Demonstrate how those features of a heritage asset that contribute to its historical, archaeological, social, artistic or architectural interest will be retained; and*
- iv. Demonstrate how the local character of the area will be respected.'*

Overall, the proposals will enhance the significance of the conservation area and its setting in a way that is consistent with its long-term conservation.

Core Strategy Policy BSC21 Quality Urban Design provides a list of design criteria which new developments are expected to meet and Development Management Policy DM29 Design of New Buildings which promotes inter alia, a high standard of design for new buildings, development that responds appropriately to their importance and reflecting their function and role in relation to the public realm. In this case, the design of the replacement block complies with this agenda.

Furthermore, the scheme is compliant with the design principles outlined in the NPPF where at paragraph 212 it is clear in advising local planning authorities to 'look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas ..., to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'

Location and Transport: Car and Cycle Parking

Core Strategy Policy BCS10 Transport and Access Improvements identifies a number of development principles which promote in a sequential list sustainable forms of transport, prioritising walking and cycling over public transport and private motor vehicles. The policy directs developments to locations where sustainable travel patterns can be achieved and which are accessible. Being located close to Whiteladies Road and adjacent to the Town Centre, the site is in a highly sustainable urban location that has easy access to key public transport routes and is in close proximity a variety of local shops and services,.

The development will create quality a mix of residential accommodation in a highly sustainable location that is close to local shops and services. It also has excellent access to public transport and is within walking distance of the Whiteladies Road Local Centre. The provision secure cycle parking will assist with the residents in making longer journeys and the various car club sites will mean they potentially have access to a car.

Walking has been identified as the most important mode of travel at the local level offering the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 kilometres. Manual For Streets (Department for Transport, 2007) provides guidance on the design, construction and maintenance of residential streets. It seeks to demonstrate of good design and assigns a higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, setting out an approach to residential streets that recognises their role in creating places that work for all members of the community. At paragraph 4.4.1 states that:

"Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot."

The NPPF encourages developments which give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities. Section 9 is entitled Promoting sustainable transport and at paragraph 109 it states: 'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.'

As described above, the site is highly accessible and within easy walking distance of a plethora of facilities.

Sustainability and Energy Use and Emissions

In accordance with BSC Policy BCS14: Sustainable Energy, the dwellings have been designed to achieve a high environmental performance with predicted energy use and CO2 emissions reduced to accord with the Council's targets. To this end Building Energy Experts were commissioned to assess the scheme and their report accompanies the application. Based upon the feasibility matrix air source heat pumps (ASHP) and solar PVs are deemed appropriate. The solar PV will be used to achieve the 20% reduction over Part L requirements. These, along with other measures to reduce heat loss will ensure the building is future proofed and the running costs of each flat will be reduced. This is achieved through improved fabric design (air tightness / insulation etc) and use of renewable energy. These are described more fully the Sustainability Statement, and the Heritage, Design and Access Statement.

Contamination and Remediation

In preparation of the proposals a Phase I Assessment of Land Quality has been undertaken with a desk and site based assessment. The report identifies potential contamination risks and recommends that intrusive investigatory works take place as part of a Phase II ground investigation. This process can take place should planning permission being granted and as a pre-commencement condition requiring a ground investigative report and remediation strategy.

Conclusions

This statement and accompanying documents have set out a rational and compelling justification for the development and demonstrated how the proposal is entirely appropriate for the context and is in accordance with relevant adopted policies.

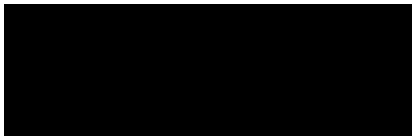
The loss of the existing employment use has been justified, and the redevelopment with the flats and HMO are entirely appropriate for the local context.

In accordance with the objectives of the Local Development Plan and current national government policy, it is concluded that there are sound planning reasons for the application to be approved and planning permission granted.

Should the Inspector who is assessing the application wishes to visit the site then I will be happy to arrange access. In this case, a site visit would be highly beneficial in understanding how the property relates to the context is an important consideration.

I trust the above information is sufficient for the application to be registered and assessed by the Inspectorate. Should there be any queries regarding the submission then please let me know at the earliest opportunity.

Yours faithfully,



Colin Pemble BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI IHBC

Aspect360 Ltd



Enc.