

PLANNING APPLICATIONS GROUP

The Planning Applications Group is a smallish group of members which meets every three weeks to consider planning applications lodged with the city council. We meet at the homes of group members which of course puts something of a limit on the size of the group. The membership remains fairly constant but changes do occur; we have recently gained two new members, Derek Rogers and Edwin Hill, both with useful backgrounds in valuing and architecture respectively, but have lost one of our stalwarts, Alan Elkan, general activist and past-chairman of the Society.



The following are some of the more interesting planning applications put forward to the city council in recent weeks.

Temple Circus Roundabout

This is a proposal to erect an illuminated wind turbine in the centre of the roundabout. Quite who the electricity is being generated for is not clear but the turbine is perhaps best considered as a work of art which also has a useful function. It has received planning permission.

Great Western Dockyard

This is of course the address of the *ss Great Britain* and the proposals are for Phase 2 of the Trust's development aspirations. The plans have been on show at the City Planning Office in Brunel House, and our comments have been submitted (and posted on the Society's website), The proposal is to recreate the former Steam Engine Works (SEW) building, at present of only one storey but to become six mainly residential ones, and to build two, gabled, 5-storey buildings on land to the south of the ship, again mainly residential. There is historical precedent for the recreation of the SEW building but not, in our view, for the two large gabled buildings. This is a complex application which may take a little while to get through the planning system.

The Glasshouse PH, Hengrove

This is a proposal to demolish the public house on Hengrove Way and use the site to build 22 flats. It is a classic example of the current trend to demolish useful buildings and use the 'brownfield' land, which often includes a car park, for residential development. Whether the public house is profitable we have no way of knowing but there is clearly a profit in the residential re-use of the land.

23 New Street, BS2

Coming back down in size and complexity, this is presently a public house which the owners wish to demolish and put in its place 14 flats. We are back with our 'brownfield' development. The Society considers the existing building an attractive one which contributes to the character of the conservation area in which it stands, and we see no reason why, if the present use is uneconomic, it cannot be suitably converted.

Former Imperial Building, Hartcliffe

This is another major development scheme, converting part of the former Wills buildings at Hartcliffe to a 334-unit residential complex. The Society has no objection to make.

Exmoor House, Myrtle Street, Southville

This is another 'brownfield' site for which flats are proposed. An earlier application went to appeal and was dismissed by the planning inspector on the grounds of its impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and on the living conditions of nearby residents. We do not see that this new application changes anything.

Adjacent to Trelawney House, including 31-32 Portland Square

This is another of those sites with a convoluted planning history. The basic proposal is to retain the facades of the Grade I listed Portland Square houses and to build behind them and along Surrey Street, providing 62 residential units. An application in 2003 for 76 flats was refused by the city council, a decision that was appealed. A public inquiry was set for January 10th 2006 but in the meantime the developer submitted new plans, withdrew the appeal, and appealed against non-determination of the 2005 scheme. This is all very complicated but the present position is that the January inquiry has been put in abeyance.

Plots ND8 and ND9, Temple Quay

These are large plots in the masterplan approved for Temple Quay North, a large development site across the water from Temple Meads, which includes the area of The Dings and lies broadly along Avon Street. The two plots are towards the east and the applications for substantial development (offices, hotel, 173 apartments, workshops and some retail) depart in some degree from the approved masterplan. However, the Society does not wish to take issue with the changes and it will be for the planners to agree them if they see fit.

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