

Comments for Planning Application 16/06785/F

Application Summary

Application Number: 16/06785/F

Address: Pring And St Hill Ltd Malago Road Bristol BS3 4JH

Proposal: Redevelopment to provide 183 no. apartments in a 6-9 storey building with associated parking and hard/soft landscape works (Major application).

Case Officer: David Grattan

Customer Details

Name: The WINDMILL HILL PLANNING GROUP (WHaM)

Address: C/O COTSWOLD RD NORTH BRISTOL

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Amenity - Residents Group

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: In summary, WHaM notes that there have been small improvements to the proposals, but objects on the grounds of:

- Height - causing overshadowing and negative impact on the existing community in relation to wellbeing, public views, and environmental impact
- Density - putting pressure on local amenities and increasing air pollution from increased traffic
- Poor design of social areas
- Housing mix - which is not suitable for families and could lead to high-turnover of residents, rather than building a community
- Insufficient affordable housing
- Lack of co-ordination between projects in and around Bedminster

We detail our full response below.

The height of the block is still 10 storeys, significantly out of context with the surrounding buildings and a tall building as defined in SPD 1. SPD 1 notes that this area is unsuitable for tall buildings. Five stories is the maximum height we would support in this area.

We believe the amendments are a minor improvement but think that more needs to be done regarding the overshadowing, height and massing to produce a development that is considerate to the existing community. We are concerned that the height means the residents of Malago Road will receive significantly less daylight, which will impact people's wellbeing.

The section showing the proposals in the context of the houses on Windmill Hill is disturbing; it

shows how the buildings will tower over those residents living along Cotswold Road, Eldon Terrace and Mendip Road, and raises questions about the impact such a long continuous development will have on those residents living on that side of the hill. Whilst the amendments have introduced a small gap between the blocks, we are concerned that the height and continuous form of the larger building will act as a wall causing the surrounding dwellings to feel hemmed in.

The block may also bring with it the associated problems of tall buildings such as high pollution levels concentrated in a localised area and 'wind tunnel' effects as air moves around the corners, which will affect existing residents as well as new occupants. We are concerned by the impact of increased pollution caused by increased traffic and the impact that this will have on air quality in the area, particularly when Bristol air quality is already breaching safe levels.

In addition, important public views (noted in SPD1), short and long distance, to and from Windmill Hill, will be considerably harmed and blocked, in particular views from the conservation area from St Johns Church Yard (view 22), and from Windmill Hill (views 27 and 29). In WHaM's community planning brief we note that development could rise to five storeys in some areas without detracting from the visual amenity of the views onto Windmill Hill and Victoria Park.

The spacing between the two blocks has led to an improvement in the landscaping. However we are concerned that the buildings will overshadow the Malago River and not provide a good environment for the wildlife there. The lack of attention to the area around the river is a missed opportunity to provide a community resource and place for wildlife.

The ground floor flat directly adjacent to the river may also feel dark, enclosed and insecure because of its location.

WHaM welcome the inclusion social areas on the roof space but are disappointed by the lack of a resolved or properly thought through design. The sketches provided are lacking in detail. The proposals for canopy structures with climbing plants directly over a fire pit or communal barbecue are unlikely to allow plants to survive; they would be likely to become scorched and also present a significant fire risk. The wisdom of including a fire pit on a roof terrace is questionable (who is responsible for its safe use in a communal space?). Opportunities for habitat potential have also been missed, as well as possibilities for providing areas for fitness and wellbeing.

We consider the consolidation of the access routes into the car park to be a welcome improvement making the urban realm a little safer for pedestrians.

The inclusion of more active frontages has also improved the security around the site and made the appearance a little more inviting. We are keen to see this included for other large scale projects in the local area.

We are concerned that the mix of housing appears to be a combination of 1 bed 2 person, 2 bed 3 person, and 2 bed 4 person flats. This is not family housing but points

towards a large number of dwellings with a high turnover of occupants. A high number of, for example, buy-to-let properties would be detrimental to establishing a new community in the area.

The group recognise that the inclusion of affordable units is a positive step, but the area requires many more than proposed. We note that the percentage of affordable housing is lower than council policy. .

It is the view of the group that a successful development will be one that encourages social interaction between its residents and the wider community, promoting social inclusion and bucking the growing trend of social isolation and loneliness within our cities. A low-rise development of mixed housing types and the inclusion of family accommodation will help this.

There is a broader concern that the potential of over 500 people moving into the area will add to the strain on the overloaded medical and educational infrastructure unless new provision is made, which has not been included in this proposal, and needs consideration in the developing proposals for the wider area.

We appreciate that some consultation has been done; members attended and spoke to the design team. However we would like to see further work done with the community to address its concerns. We would like to see a development here that augments the local community. There is concern that the lack of co-ordination between projects in and around Bedminster Green may damage what already exists.

The group has produced a site brief for the local area which sets out the priorities of the community. We encourage all developers around Bedminster Green to make use of this document when submitting proposals. As it stands WHaM does not support this development.