Bath Western Riverside

Outline Planning Application Design Statement
April 2006

Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects
1.0 Introduction

This Outline Planning Application Design Statement accompanies formal applications for Outline Planning permission, Conservation Area consent and Listed Building consent, as defined in the supporting planning statement and as agreed with Bath and North East Somerset Council Development Control, in summary as follows:

- Outline Planning Application for residential development and associated uses, access and landscaping for the main application site to the south of the River Avon.

- Conservation Area Application for residential development and associated uses, access and landscaping for the main application site to the north of the River Avon.

The information included in the Statement includes a description of the application site, an analysis of the conceptual design approach, supporting description of the application drawings, and supporting illustrative design material indicating the form, materials and elevation treatment of the buildings.

The Design Statement is to be read in conjunction with the separate Outline Planning Application Landscape Design Statement produced by Grant Associates, the Sustainable Development Strategy produced by ESD, and the detailed Environmental Statement produced by Hepher Dixon and WSP.
2.0 Site analysis

2.1 Site location and physical context

The Bath Western Riverside site is located approximately 400 to 800 metres to the west of the city centre and is adjacent to and directly south of Victoria Park. The diagram indicates key local amenities including schools, hospitals and cultural buildings, together with the main public transport connections.

Existing bus services operate along both Upper and Lower Bristol Road.

The first section of the Sustrans National Cycle Network runs through the site along the northern bank of the river.

The site extends to approximately 17.9 hectares with the largest part to the south of the River Avon, and includes three existing river crossings at Victoria Bridge, Destructor Bridge and the old gas works pedestrian bridge, now used as a gas pipe crossing.

Approximately 50% of the site was formerly the Stothert and Pitt crane manufacturing works which was decommissioned and cleared in the 1980's. This portion of the site has been left mostly level at height of 18 to 19 metres AOD.

The remaining site to the south of the river comprises the currently operational gas works and a number of sublet employment uses, with an approximate ground level of 21 to 22 metres AOD.

The area to the north of the river, currently the Municipal recycling facility has a frontage to Upper Bristol Road at an approximate ground level of 21.5 metres AOD, and extends to the north bank of the river at an approximate ground level of 19 metres AOD.
Bath Western Riverside
2.0 Site analysis

2.2 Urban and Historical Context

The existing City of Bath is composed of predominantly Georgian and Victorian developments based on earlier settlements which were built around the hot springs at the base of the River Avon valley, including Roman and earlier settlements. The urban form of the main city districts is characterised by the a light (medieval) city centre pattern, the Georgian expansion to the north of the river and later Victorian districts to the south, contained and surrounded by natural topography.

The city centre extends over an area of approximately 53 ha and contains a mixture of 4 to 5 storey Georgian buildings with residential property and offices over shops and other commercial uses. Many of these buildings are 12 to 15 metres in height to parapet level with an additional storey within Mansard roofs. Late 18th and 19th Century buildings, including the Guildhall, the Assembly Rooms, and earlier churches and the Abbey are interspersed at intervals throughout the centre. Later 20th Century constructions include university buildings, council offices, the Hilton Hotel and the Southgate Shopping Centre. There are a few remaining 19th Century industrial buildings along the banks of the river stretching west from the city centre.

The main Georgian expansion of Bath surrounds the city centre to the north and east, with particular areas to the south, and is notable for a series of formal urban spaces, grand terraces and crescents of houses arranged along the slopes of the hills. The unfinished grand spaces and terraces proposed within the marshy areas along the eastern river plains are now represented by the formal Great Pultney Street and North Parade. The majority of these buildings were built as purely residential, arranged as houses but often inhabited when new and today as apartments.

The largely Victorian expansion to the south of the river accompanied the arrival of the railways, as did the industrial development along the river flood plain to the west of the city centre.

The Bath Western Riverside site lies to the west of the city centre along the river corridor, was originally marsh land, and later became the main industrial area of Bath including notably the main works of Stothert and Pitt who were renowned for crane manufacture up until the late 1970’s, employing 3000 in their heyday. The Stothert and Pitt works occupied 6.6 ha directly to the east of Victoria Bridge Road and between Victoria Bridge Road and Midland Road. To the west of Midland Road the site has been used since the early 19th century as a gas and coke works, initially manufacturing town gas. The Midland Railway extended from Green Park (formerly Queen’s Square) Station along the southern boundary of the site separated from Lower Bristol Road in part by Victoria Buildings. The only remains of the railway are the embankment to the rear of Victoria Buildings and associated bridge walls.

The other remaining significant industrial heritage on the site is Victoria Bridge, an historically important suspension bridge built in 1836 by James Dredge.

The eastern end of the SPG site borders the city centre and includes Green Park Railway Station (now part car park and part retail space), a Sainsbury’s supermarket, Homebase and other commercial property. The Outline Planning Application proposals to the west lie within the outer residential “belt” surrounding the city centre which is characterised by the Georgian terraces, squares and crescents to the north, the Victorian terraces to the south and the larger public landscape parks and spaces. The site is bounded to the north and south by Upper and Lower Bristol Roads, two main routes to and from the west, and the River Avon runs through the site.
2.3 Site photographs towards the site
2.0 Site analysis

2.3 Site photographs towards the site
Bath Western Riverside

2.3 Site photographs from the site

A

B

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2.0 Site analysis

2.3 Site photographs from the site
Bath Western Riverside

2.3 Site photographs of the gasholders and Wessex Water compound

A  B  C  D

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2.0 Site analysis

2.3 Site photographs from Lower Bristol Road and the Municipal Recycling Facility
2.0 Site analysis

2.4 Physical Constraints

The main physical constraints to development on the site, as identified on the constraints diagram are as follows:

- The operational Wessex Water sewage pumping station at the centre of the site pumps sewage from Bath to treatment works at Salford to the west. A deep sewage tunnel runs to the east, and whilst this can be built over there is a requirement to bridge over it, imposing certain constraints on the design of foundations and piling. A high pressure sewage pipe runs from the pumping station to the west, and this section of the system cannot be built over.

- There are a number of surface water sewers / culverts crossing the site from the south to the river. These sewers include restrictive easements prohibiting development above, or require diversion to allow development.

- There is an 8 metre easement zone along the banks of the river to the benefit of the Environment Agency for the maintenance of the existing flood defences. In addition the existing sheet pile flood defences to the edges of the river are tied into the bedrock by ties extending approximately 16 metres into the site.

In addition to physical constraints change in planning policy, concerning flooding in response to global warming, is due to come into force in the summer of 2006. Planning Policy Guidance 25 (PPG25) is due to be replaced by Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) which considers the management of both 20% and 30% increases in the anticipated flow of a 100 year flood event and the concomitant enlargements of the flood plane. The flood risk diagrams illustrate the impact of the changing planning guidance, and the extent of the new flood plain affected by the proposed development. Discussions with the Environment Agency have resulted in agreement to allow flood plain compensation by volume for a 1 in 100 year event with 20% increase in flow. This is illustrated in the flood diagrams and the following master plan drawings.
2.0 Site analysis

2.4 Planning Context

This outline planning application has been prepared in relation to an existing Supplementary Planning Guidance (draft dated April 2003) and developing planning policy in relation to the site and wider development parameters, as defined in the accompanying planning statement.
3.0 Outline Planning Application Brief

3.1 Schedule of Accommodation

Summary brief:
The existing planning guidance for the Western Riverside site to the west of Victoria Bridge Road defines the most suitable uses as primarily residential, with a limited proportion of local retail and commercial in support to the residential community.

Other possible uses include a new 2 form entry primary school with associated play areas, external teaching spaces and support accommodation.

This site forms approximately half of the 35 hectare area covered in the SPG with the area outside of the Outline Planning Application site, in particular the area to the east between Victoria Bridge Road and Green Park Station, designated as more city centre mixed use.

The residential brief includes sustainability and energy requirements, including the provision of a central ‘energy centre’ which are described in the accompanying Sustainable Development Strategy produced by ESD.

Site area:
The overall Outline Planning Application site area is 17.9 hectares, including the area of the River Avon between Victoria Bridge and Windsor Bridge. The area excluding the river, but including the northern river bank footpath / cycle route and Destructor and Victoria Bridges, is approximately 16.1 hectares.

Approximate schedule of accommodation:

Option 1:

- **Residential** – 154,600 m² / 1,664,200 ft² (2,055 units comprising studio, 1 bed, 2 bed, 3 bed apartments, and 3 bed houses).
- **Commercial** – 6,660 m² / 71,685 ft² including for example a community hall, GP surgery, retail & convenience retail.
- **Student accommodation** – 15,890 m² / 171,040 ft² (approximately 650 student rooms plus 600m² / 6460 ft² of communal facilities).

Option 2:

- **Residential** – 156,435 m² / 1,683,865 ft² (2,074 units comprising studio, 1 bed, 2 bed, 3 bed apartments, and 3 bed houses).
- **Commercial** – 6,153 m² / 60,230 ft² including for example a GP surgery, retail & convenience retail.
- **Student accommodation** – 7,309 m² / 78,675 ft² (approximately 300 student rooms plus 260m² / 2800 ft² of communal facilities).
- **2FE primary school** – 2,200 m² / 23,680 ft² including community hall and adult learning facilities.

An allowance of 25% of residential units, excluding studio apartments, has been made in each case for Affordable Housing provision, with a mix of tenures.

Development Density

The average residential density (excluding student housing) equates to approximately 153 dwellings per hectare, based on a site area for the residential development excluding student housing sites of approximately 13.45 hectares.
Bath Western Riverside

The River

Palaces in the river park

Connections