

**WARD:** Central **CONTACT OFFICER:** Alison Straw  
**SITE ADDRESS:** Former Central Ambulance Station Marybush Lane Bristol BS2 0JB

**APPLICATION NO:** 17/04267/F Full Planning

**DETERMINATION DEADLINE:** 20 March 2018

*Residential redevelopment (with a tall building element) including communal facilities, amenity space and car parking, together with vehicular access, servicing arrangements, public realm works and landscaping. (Major).*

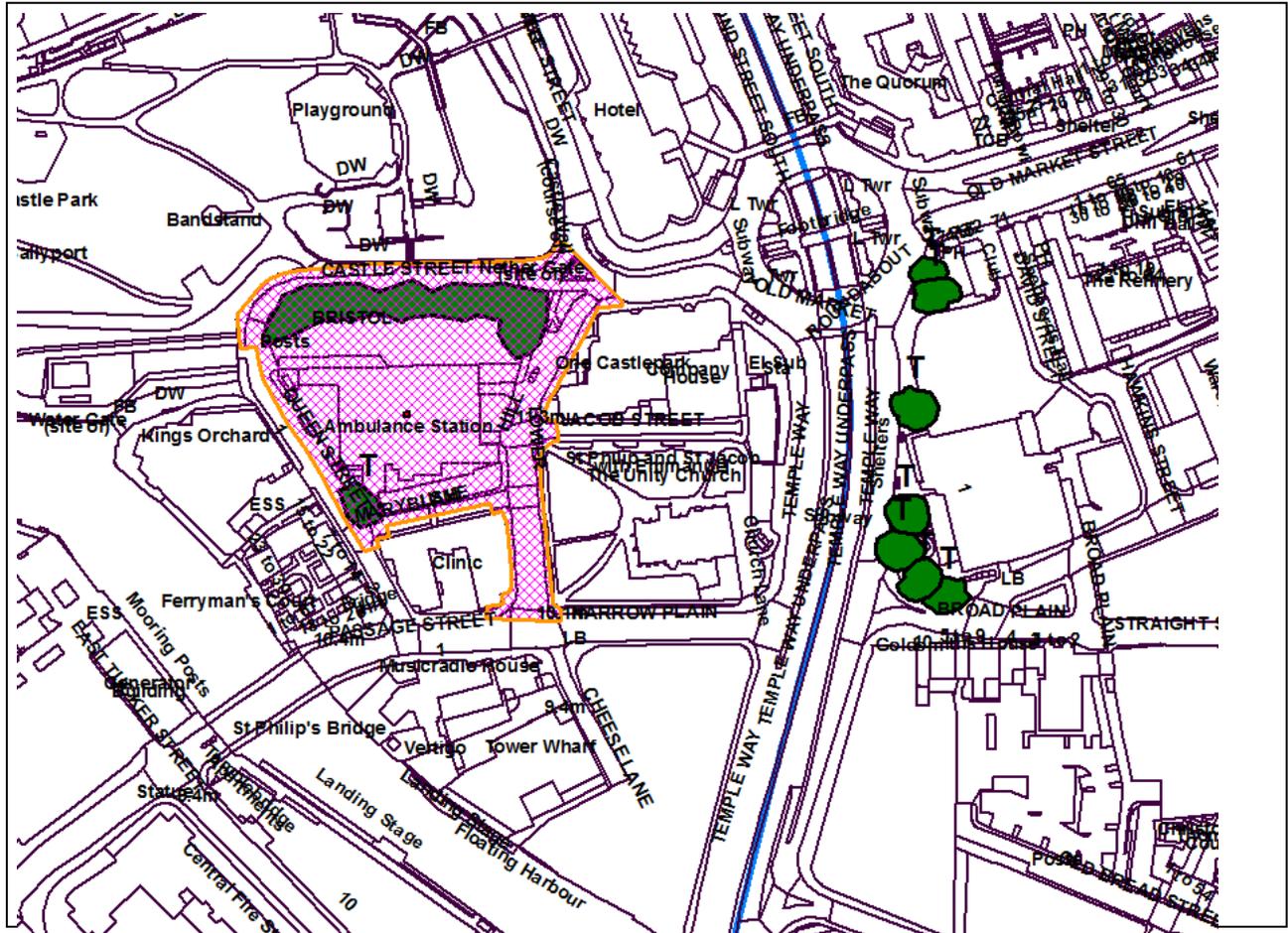
**RECOMMENDATION:** GRANT subject to Planning Agreement

**AGENT:** Savills (L&P) Plc  
 Embassy House  
 Queens Avenue  
 Bristol  
 BS8 1SB

**APPLICANT:** Linkcity  
 C/o Agent

*The following plan is for illustrative purposes only, and cannot be guaranteed to be up to date.*

**LOCATION PLAN:**



**Development Control Committee B – 20 December 2017****Application No. 17/04267/F: Former Central Ambulance Station Marybush Lane Bristol BS2 0JB****SUMMARY**

This application relates to the redevelopment of the former Central Ambulance Station (0.7 ha), located within Bristol City Centre at the south eastern end of Castle Park; currently a cleared site and allocated for redevelopment in the Bristol Central Area Plan (BCAP), an allocation that is reflected in the Old Market Neighbourhood Plan.

It is proposed to redevelop the site for residential purposes, (375 homes) in this instance for the private rental sector (PRS); the second purpose built private rental scheme in Bristol. The proposals will include an element of affordable housing (20%), this lower amount justified by the submission of a Viability Report.

The proposals include a tall building on part of the site which will be the tallest building within the city centre. As such the scheme has been considered against the relevant policies and guidance which assist in the assessment of tall buildings across the city.

Members will see from the report that there are strong objections from the Civic Society, the Old Market Community Organisation and the Conservation Advisory Panel, all of which are reported in full. The objections centre around the tall building element of the scheme, in particular its height and architectural qualities and its subsequent impacts across the city, including views from the conservation areas of Old Market and Castle Park and subsequent impact upon a number of other heritage assets. There are also concerns with regard to the layout and permeability of the site; the level of affordable housing and the mix of the units proposed.

In support representatives of the retail / commercial sector (The Galleries; Broadmead BID manager) as well members of the public (albeit a limited response), consider that the proposals represent a real opportunity to regenerate and rejuvenate this key part of Bristol and re-inforce the Mayor's view that Bristol is a confident and ambitious city.

Members will see from the report that officers have considered all the issues and have come to a balanced recommendation of approval, recognising that as with any major scheme there are a number of competing demands. The recommendation is subject to a legal agreement and conditions in order to sufficiently mitigate any impacts.

**THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS**

Members will be aware that the site was formerly the Central Ambulance Station and also a public car park (some 170 spaces). It has been a cleared site since January 2016. It is now proposed to be redeveloped in the following way:-

- 375 homes within a perimeter block development.
- The tenure to comprise 300 (80%) for the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and 75 (20%) to be Affordable Housing.
- A tall building element of 24 storeys.
- A mix of studio, 1, 2 bed roomed apartments
- Internal amenity / community spaces at ground and top floor to include games, fitness and TV rooms and communal dining facilities.
- 490 cycle parking spaces, including visitor spaces
- 36 residential car parking spaces (7 are electric charging and 2 DDA compliant)
- Areas of external amenity space accessible for all occupiers
- The removal of four trees and the replacement with 18 trees, including a number of street trees (and contributions to further re-planting in the vicinity).

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- Various highway infrastructure works, including the provision of widened footways and revised junction arrangements and cycle path route.
- A Sustainable scheme, which amongst other things is likely to connect to the District Heating Network.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Submitted with the application was a Statement of Community Involvement (March 2017).

*Process:* The Statement advises that the developer was keen to ensure the proposal was explained well to the community and that the community had a chance to contribute to the plan. A public consultation expert worked alongside the planning consultants to help undertake the consultation. The statement sets out the programme of activity which included early liaison with the Neighbourhood Planning Network; the Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East Neighbourhood Partnership; the assistant mayors; meetings with ward members; the Bristol Civic Society; the Old market Community Association; Castle Park Users Group and near neighbours amongst others. There were also presentations of the evolving scheme to the Bristol Urban Design Forum; two Member and Stakeholder Briefings facilitated by Bristol City Council; a stakeholder workshop held at the neighbouring Pip 'n' Jay Church and a two day public exhibition. A bespoke website was also set up.

*Outcomes:* The feedback forms and stakeholder responses are appended to the statement. The statement sets out the issues raised at these events and the applicants response. Whilst there has been comprehensive engagement with residents, representatives and other stakeholders the commentary within the submitted table would appear rather a justification for the approach taken, rather than explaining how the scheme might have been revised to take on board the feedback received. Members will be aware of the comments of the Old Market Community Association with regard to the community involvement process (see below) who are of the view that there “seems to have been little or no evolution of the fundamental design” regardless of this process.

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

**Planning applications** - Previous planning applications on this site were pre 2000 and not considered particularly relevant to the current proposals.

**Screening Opinions – 15/05939/SCR & 16/06880/SCR** – both of which advised that the development proposals did not warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Prior Approvals – 14/05307/N** – Prior approval was given for the demolition of the ambulance station and car park in November 2014.

**Pre Application Enquiry - 15/05166/PREAPP** – Given the scale and complexity of the scheme an extensive pre application enquiry process was undertaken with the Local Planning Authority. This has been an iterative process over the period up to the submission of the current scheme.

As part of the pre application process the proposals were presented on two occasions to the **Bristol Urban Design Forum**, the last presentation was held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and the proposals were not dissimilar to that which is now proposed. The Panel raised the following concerns:-

1. It is disappointing that the archaeology of such importance in the history of Bristol and this location could not have been interpreted in a more compelling way.
2. Very little active frontage is proposed, and nothing of an “offer” to either passers-by or users of the park.
3. The proposal contributes little to the vitality of the city at this key location.
4. The landscaped courtyard, which is tantalisingly visible from the street, is closed off in the harshest

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manner due to the lack of a clear and inspiring brief. It has little character and the scheme suggested has little in the way of the activities your team described.

5. Given your proposition that this project is marginal in its viability, it was disappointing that there were areas of the site surrounding the buildings that could have been developed and thereby generate more floor-space, at the same time adding character and interest.

6. The clear and dramatic separation of the PRS element facing the park and the “affordable” social rented block facing away, was not in line with current good practice of integrating the two types of tenure.

7. The tower needs to be of sufficient distinctiveness and quality to create the “landmark” this special location deserves, particularly if it is to be at the height proposed; currently the scheme does not deliver this. This current submission has just magnified the short-comings of the previous submission.

8. The separate elements of the scheme appeared to lack a cohesive programme to unite them and a set piece.

Accordingly the Panel suggests that a fresh approach is taken to produce an appropriate solution to this challenging but interesting site to create a development of which the City can be proud.

**RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION**

A site notice and press notice were issued and neighbours consulted by individual letter. Following a number of revisions to the submission the proposals were re consulted upon. The following comments have been received:-

**Members of the Public** – The Authority has received a total of 5 letters; two in support and three objecting to the proposed scheme on the following grounds:-

In support – height and design are good, bringing a modern and bright atmosphere to a desolate part of the city centre; an opportunity to revitalise and modernise a key space, which has been desperate for a landmark development; need to continue to modernize the city centre; a prime site and necessary to have a “stand – out building”; we should not be stuck in the 1950’s, but move on as other cities have done.

Objection - Scale and Massing – 26 storeys is too tall; we should not be building tall buildings in light of Grenfell Towers incident. Completely out of proportion.

**Broadmead BID Manager / Galleries Shopping Centre** – welcome the additional customers into the Bristol Shopping Quarter which will continue to flourish with more residents in the city centre. The apartments may well provide high quality accommodation for retail and support staff. The bold design of the tall building will bring attention and investment to this end of Castle Park which has previously suffered from under – investment.

**Destination Bristol** “Currently, the North East part of Castle Park and this derelict site gives a very poor impression to visitors drawn to this area, including visitors to Bristol Shopping Quarter, which employs many thousands of people. Visitors to the adjacent Marriott Hotel look out to a site that has sat boarded-up for many years, this does not give a true reflection of how vibrant and exciting Bristol is, many visitors have expressed a negative view. This proposal offers a real opportunity to regenerate and rejuvenate this key part of Bristol. The inclusion of a well-designed, high quality tower will reinforce the Mayor’s view that high quality tall buildings show Bristol is a confident and ambitious city - we support this view. The reconfiguration of this site, as set out in the application, will send an important and clear message to investors and visitors alike, that Bristol is a fantastic place to visit, live, work and to invest in. We encourage support of the scheme and look forward to seeing it built as soon as possible”.

**Development Control Committee B – 20 December 2017****Application No. 17/04267/F: Former Central Ambulance Station Marybush Lane Bristol BS2 0JB****Old Market Community Association (OMCA) Comments –**

“It is important to state that the members of our planning group have been keenly involved with any of the meetings and workshops that have been held in relation to this proposal. We have tried to work constructively with the development design team and their associates to help them appreciate our considered comments as to how the buildings would work best. We support a well - designed, quality development on this site. We are of the opinion that, as presented, this proposal falls well short of achieving either of those criteria. We have set our comments below.

*Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Development Plan (OMQNDP)* - The site is wholly within the OMQNDP area. There is no reference in the application to policies set out in the plan. The Design and Access Statement refers to the Neighbourhood Plan as ‘emerging’ whereas it was ‘made’ in March 2016 and is now an integral part of the Bristol Local Plan. This is a missed opportunity to take the ratified ambitions of the local community into consideration when first approaching the fundamental design of the scheme. Other developers, such as those who brought forward the Print Hall site (now almost complete) truly embraced the ideas laid out in the plan and worked with the community to produce a scheme that went successfully through the planning process and will deliver a win-win development for both the owners and the community alike.

There is only one 3-bedroom flat out of a total of 375; the Neighbourhood Plan Policy C5 states ‘Proposals for dwellings suitable for occupation by families and having at least three bedrooms will be encouraged’. As this site is owned in partnership by BCC and the HCA we would have hoped that this would be an ideal opportunity to create these much needed larger dwellings that could potentially house families within the city centre.

*Building Height* - The existence of the two towers, Castlemead (21 storeys) and Eclipse (18 storeys) on the northern corner of Castle Park does not vindicate the assumption that a similar tower is suitable for the eastern corner of the park. These two buildings are too far away to create a readable, visual link with the ambulance station site.

OMCA have a fundamental objection to a 26 storey tower (Block C) on the corner of Castle Street and Tower Hill. It is not necessary to greatly exceed the height of the adjacent building, One Castlepark. The ‘tower’ needs to be considered in full context, including the views along the length of Old Market Street; it will be a highly detrimental intrusion onto the street scene, detracting from the Old Market Conservation Area and its many listed buildings, and dwarfing the Central Hall cupola, which is a local landmark. A building the same height as One Castlepark would not have the same effect, but would be a continuation of the gently curving line of the southern side of Old Market Street.

Similarly oblique views of the development from the eastern end and centre of Castle Park must be considered; the ‘tower’ will dominate the views and will have even greater prominence than the Eclipse and Castlemead towers. These two buildings have a detrimental effect on the park, dominating the view eastwards from the western end and centre of the park and having the effect of making Castle Park appear much smaller than it is. A third tower will only exacerbate this perception. A building that is the same height as One Castlepark would not dominate the views from the park.

We would reiterate the comments made in our joint response with Bristol Civic Society following pre-application meetings with Bouygues in October 2015 that there is a strong argument to step down the storeys from the Marriott Hotel (13 storeys) towards the south west, which would create a better visual link to the Finzels Reach development and to No1 Queen Street. In addition to the 25 storey Block C, the 9 storey Block A does not provide such a visual link and indeed will be over dominant when viewed from the centre of Castle Park.

*Building Layout and the spaces between* - The footprint of buildings does not encroach on the area of the Castle Ditch. We therefore consider that the Ditch could be opened up, even if only partially, and made into an attractive feature in the centre of the site. It should not be considered as a body of still

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dank water surrounded by high walls; it is part of the Floating Harbour – possibly Bristol's most important asset.

OMCA support the view set out by the Bristol Urban Design Forum (BUDF) in their letter dated 8th December 2015 that the nature of the open space within the site should be determined by analysis of pedestrian routes through the area and should focus on how residents and the public alike will interact with this space and the form of the external areas. The site is gated off with no public access, whereas the nearby Finzells Reach development has embraced the concept of being openly accessible, to its benefit. The complete lack of any public access through the Ambulance Station site is not welcome. There is a very strong desire line from the end of Jacob Street to the main path crossing Castle Park, as the path worn in the grass short cutting the Castle Street/Tower Hill corner shows. Additionally there is a strong case for a north/south route through the site from the Queen Street/Marybush Lane corner to Castle Street, opposite the vaulted chambers; this would form a direct route from Counterslip Bridge across Castle Park to Cabot Circus.

The removal of the tree in the south west corner of the site is regretted. This tree, which is given a B category, has 40+ years of life left in it and it makes an important contribution to the street scene, as such it should be kept and exploited as an asset in the urban design context.

*The Design of the Buildings* - There is no reason to make the buildings in this development 'an iconic landmark in the centre of Bristol'. The site is not a natural location for a landmark; it forms an edge to Castle Park and as such the buildings facing the park should be treated as a backdrop to the trees around the edge of the park.

In general the proposed indicative materials bear little relationship to Bristol and many of the precedents shown have no relationship to Bristol whatever. It is essential that good quality materials are used; predominately brick of type and colour found in traditional Bristol buildings with some stone and glass and ceramic panels. We would not encourage the use of timber cladding and large areas of scraped self-coloured render due to their poor ageing properties (though painted, roughcast render is fine). From the onset we have been somewhat nervous of the terms 'iconic, landmark, high-quality, achievable within a budget' being used in the same sentence. The proposed materials palette does not bode well in terms of delivering anything close to iconic or high quality.

We are also unconvinced that a singularly tall building is the best or most efficient delivery mechanism for high-density, quality, city dwellings.

OMCA agree with BUDF view that more articulation of the blocks is required in terms of finesse in the bulk/ silhouette to make the buildings 'really interesting and fitting to this prestigious and prominent site' and that at present the scheme is 'unambitious and somewhat lumpen'.

*The Relationship to Castle Park* - OMCA aims that are that are set out in Project PR6 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Castle Street to be closed to vehicles and made into a cyclist and pedestrian only route that forms the eastern gateway to Castle Park and for the mediaeval bridge that takes Queen Street over the Castle Ditch to be opened up to form another cyclist and pedestrian only entrance to Castle Park. The entrance to blocks C off Castle Street jeopardises this, as does the proposal to access the parking under blocks A, B and C from the existing entrance off Queen Street on the park side of the bridge. Providing the main entrance to these blocks and to the parking under them from Tower Hill would resolve this.

OMCA and Bristol Civic Society wish to see improvements to the eastern end of Castle Park. Planning policy for development of the Ambulance Station site in the Bristol Central Area Plan seeks improvements to important gateways to Castle Park from Old Market and Queen Street/Castle Street and enhancement of Bristol Castle's vaulted chambers within Castle Park. As such we would seek a commitment from Bouygues to contribute to the removal of mounds and walls, redirecting paths,

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regrading, reseeding and replanting trees at the eastern corner of Castle Park (see attached diagram). This could be via section 106 agreement or by physically carrying out the work in lieu.

*Summary*

The main points of concern to OMCA are:

1. The inaccessibility of the open space in the centre of the scheme. OMCA's aspiration is that this space should include a public thoroughfare that links the end of Jacob Street with the end of Queen Street and thence to Castle Park.
2. The failure to remove all motorised vehicles from Castle Street. The aspiration is that this becomes a cycle and pedestrian route with the eastern end marked by a gateway that becomes the formal entrance to Castle Park.
3. The lack of any study of the effect of the tower on Old Market. The tower will be visible from the eastern end of West Street and thence all the way along West Street and Old Market Street. West Street and Old Market Street are the core of the Old Market Conservation Area. The tower will severely affect the character and setting of the Conservation Area.
4. No acknowledgement of the community's aspiration to improve the eastern end of Castle Park – removal of mounds and walls to open up the vaulted chambers building and to create a level grassed area up to Lower Castle Street in place of the present unusable steep overgrown areas that attract antisocial activities and litter.
5. The loss of the fine street tree on the south-west corner of the site that helped to break up the bulk of building and lessen the loss of amenity that will be caused to the residents of Ferrymans Court.
6. The low level of affordable housing on a site part-owned by the City.
7. The lack of 3-bedroom dwellings.
8. The proposed buildings are bland and lack articulation. Architecturally they lack ambition, finesse and interest as the buildings are not recognisable as a part of Bristol.

*Public/community engagement process.* - We had strong reservations with the proposal and the design teams lack of response to the concerns of the various stakeholder groups and so in April 2016 we prepared an alternative proposal for the site on behalf of OMCA which does not include a tower block. We tabled this proposal at a meeting with the planning officers, together with 14 'SketchUp' photomontages which shown comparative views – existing, Linkcity/Bouygues proposal and OMCA proposal. While the officers thanked us for our efforts and confirmed that they would review and raise the concerns with Linkcity/Bouygues, we did not receive any response.

Despite our input and vocalised concerns, the scheme has hardly changed since it was first shown to the Civic Society and OMCA in 2015; all that has happened is that the amount of accommodation on the site has been greatly increased to the detriment of the surrounding area. We would therefore question the worth of all the time spent by so many concerned individuals attending the numerous meetings. There seems to have been little or no evolution of the fundamental design, regardless of the public consultation process, something which is most frustrating to the individuals who have given up precious time and energy to get the best for the built environment in this precious space.

Despite all the pre-application meetings and various 'stakeholder' representations, this scheme has not improved in over two years of development and there seems to be a reluctance to positively address the issues that are causing concern. The excessive number of pre-application meetings between the developer and the Council would suggest that there are too many problems with the proposed scheme. It is our view that the basic concept is flawed and that maybe a radical rethink is required. This site is so important in terms of creating a visual and physical reference to the east of the city that any tall building would need to be of truly high quality if it was to be worthy of handing on to the future generations of Bristolians. We fear that this proposal will come nowhere near achieving that legacy, instead it may set an unwelcome precedent of lack-lustre tall buildings dominating our precious urban environment".

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**Bristol Civic Society** – “The Bristol Civic Society strongly supports the development of this site and has attended all of the developer's meetings and workshops. The Society has worked constructively with the development design team. The Society is disappointed that the proposal remains uninfluenced by any of the constructive responses from the Society and others particularly from the Old Market Community Association with whom it has worked closely. The Society cannot support the current scheme. The Society entirely supports the OMRA response. It is unnecessary to burden the Society's response with a repetition of the detailed reasons set out in the OMRA response. The scheme fails to comply with the Council's planning policy. The Society has nothing further to add”.

**Conservation Advisory Panel** – “Although the site is not within a conservation area, it is a very sensitive part of the city and proposed development should be carefully considered in terms of its location, scale and design. If built, the current proposal would comprehensively wipe away all the historic layers of development of the area. Such fundamental change would destroy the shape and history of a significant part of the city. This increasingly common type of large, monolithic and nondescript development has no respect for place, being driven by economic factors, rather than a desire to create high quality buildings that respond to their historic, urban context.

The Panel is concerned about the impact the proposed tower would have on the Church of St Jacob and St Philip, which is a Grade II\* listed building. The views of the tower would be highly visible from three surrounding conservation areas and the city in general. The poor, generic quality of the design is unworthy of its conspicuous location and would significantly harm nearby heritage assets and the wider landscape. Any public benefit derived from this scheme would not outweigh the significant harm it would cause; as such, the proposal is contrary to relevant Local Plan Policy and the NPPF.

The archaeological assessment is inadequate and excludes the post-medieval period. This part of the historic street pattern is archaeologically very important and there is scant information on it in the desktop study.

The Panel recommends that the development site be examined by open area excavation in its entirety, prior to development. The Panel considers that the development would result in the total erosion of an important part of the city's 17th and 18th century history and that the architectural desktop study and evaluation have failed to recognise this.

The desktop study by N. Corcos acknowledged that it was 'regrettable that there is as yet for the area containing the study site and its immediate environs, no detailed, plot by plot analysis of the development of the medieval streetscape, such as Dr Leech has already carried out for both the central area of the medieval town, within and immediately adjacent to the city walls, and the University precinct around St Michael's Hill (Leech 1997 and 2000). The Panel's view is that the author of the desktop study should have identified from Dr Leech's other published work (2014 - *The Town House in Medieval and Early Modern Bristol*, pp.176-7; 2006 ed. (with Adrian Green), *Cities in the World*, Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology Monograph 3, p.161; 1999 – *The processional city: some issues for historical archaeology*, in eds. Tarlow, S. and West, S., *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of later historical Britain*, 29-30) that he had carried out such work in identifying nos.50-61 Castle Street (the north side of the development area) as being an area of outstandingly important post-medieval archaeology, comparable in importance in an Atlantic world context to sites such as Williamsburg or Jamestown, VA. The desktop study Author could, alternatively have researched the plot histories himself, from the rich archival resources for the redevelopment of the castle in the 1650s and later, and from the records resulting from the City Council's Planning and Housing Committees purchasing all the properties in this area blitzed in WW2.

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The evaluation by B. Williams focussed entirely on the medieval archaeology of the area. It failed to correlate in the plans and text any of the post medieval features with the evidence on the 1880s and earlier maps or in the detailed records referenced in Dr Leech's 2014 Selective Inventory. Following the lack of quality data from the desktop study, not even the house and workshops of the Hunt family, tobacco pipe makers whose products are widely scattered across the Atlantic world, could even be identified or investigated. The repeated statements in 'The Results' that 'no archaeological features' were present are a nonsense, as there were clearly many features - simply they were post-medieval, not medieval”.

**OTHER COMMENTS**

Historic England – None received.

**The Council’s City Design Group (Urban Design; Conservation; Archaeology; Public Art; Landscape)** no objections - refer to Key Issues B, C and D.

**The Council’s Transport Development Management Team** –no objections - refer to Key Issue H.

**Sustainability Team** – No objections subject to conditions – refer to Key Issue i.

**Pollution Control** – No objections subject to conditions – refer to Key Issue G.

**Bristol Waste** - No objections - “The Developers have been in communication with us during their planning process and have therefore provided sufficient resources within this current development to manage their waste”

**Land Contamination** – No objections subject to conditions.

**Air Quality Team** – No objections – “The application doesn’t generate any significant air quality impact and the new exposure introduced is all below the relevant air quality objectives. Hence I have no objection to the development on air quality grounds”.

**Ecology** – No objections subject to conditions regarding the timing of vegetation clearance; the nature of the proposed brown roofs; the provision of bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities and avoidance of vibration in the vicinity of the culvert during piling.

**Avon and Somerset Constabulary** - no objections, albeit would suggest that consideration be given to applying the Secure by Design certification and advice given with specific regard to the accessibility to the site.

**Wessex Water** – No objections in principle.

**Environment Agency** – No objections subject to conditions.

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RELEVANT POLICIES

**National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012**

**Bristol Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011)**

BCS2 Bristol City Centre  
BCS5 Housing Provision  
BCS9 Green Infrastructure  
BCS10 Transport and Access Improvements  
BCS11 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions  
BCS12 Community Facilities  
BCS13 Climate Change  
BCS14 Sustainable Energy  
BCS15 Sustainable Design and Construction  
BCS16 Flood Risk and Water Management  
BCS17 Affordable Housing Provision  
BCS18 Housing Type  
BCS20 Effective and Efficient Use of Land  
BCS21 Quality Urban Design  
BCS22 Conservation and the Historic Environment  
BCS23 Pollution

**Bristol Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014)**

DM1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development housing  
DM4 Wheelchair accessible housing  
DM14 The health impacts of development  
DM15 Green infrastructure provision  
DM19 Development and nature conservation  
DM22 Development Adjacent to Waterways  
DM23 Transport development management  
DM26 Local character and distinctiveness  
DM27 Layout and form  
DM28 Public realm  
DM29 Design of new buildings  
DM31 Heritage assets  
DM32 Recycling and refuse provision in new development  
DM33 Pollution control, air quality and water quality  
DM35 Noise mitigation

**Bristol Central Area Plan (Adopted March 2015)**

BCAP1 Mixed-use development in Bristol City Centre  
BCAP3 Family sized homes  
BCAP5 Development and Flood Risk  
BCAP20 Sustainable design standards  
BCAP21 Connection to heat networks  
BCAP22 Habitat Preservation, enhancement and creation of waterways.  
BCAP25 Green infrastructure in city centre developments.  
BCAP29 Car and cycle parking  
BCAP30 Pedestrian routes  
BCAP31 Active ground floor uses and active frontages in Bristol City Centre  
BCAP33 Key city spaces.  
BCAP37 High Street, Wine Street and Castle Park

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T1 Environmental Impact  
 T3 Car Parking Provision  
 B2 Design of New Buildings  
 C1 Mixed Use Development  
 C5 Better balanced housing  
 C6 Site Specific Policies / Principles  
 E1 Trees  
 E2 Wildlife  
 E3 Protect Open Spaces

**Supplementary Planning Documents**

SPD1 Tall Buildings (January 2005)  
 Planning Obligations SPD – (Adopted 27 Sept 2012)

**Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Conservation Area Character Appraisal - City and Queen Square  
 Conservation Area Character Appraisal – Old Market  
 Conservation Area Character Appraisal – Redcliffe  
 Park and Green Space Strategy?  
 Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4 (Dec 2015)  
 Affordable Housing Practice Note (AHPN) **STATUS**

**Legislation**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990  
 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990  
 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Equalities Impact Assessment**

During the determination of this application due regard has been given to the impact of this scheme in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 in terms of its impact upon key equalities protected characteristics. These characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Overall, it is considered that the approval of this application would not have any significant adverse impact upon different groups or implications for the Equalities Act 2010. In this case the design and access to the development have been assessed with particular regard to disability, age and pregnancy and maternity issues.

**KEY ISSUES**

Development Plan policies referred to below are pre fixed by the following codes:- BCS - Bristol Core Strategy; DM - Bristol Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Document ;BCAP – Bristol Central Area Plan; OM – Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Plan.

**(A) THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

In terms of the proposed uses, Bristol City Centre's role as a regional focus is to be promoted and strengthened and amongst other things, the more efficient use of land and a greater mix of uses are to be encouraged (BCS2 refers) Opportunities for high quality and where appropriate, high density mixed use development to maximise opportunities to re-use brownfield land in the most efficient way are to be taken (policies BCS7, BSC20 and BCAP 1). New homes are to be delivered within the built up area to contribute towards accommodating a growing number of people and households in the city (policy BCS5 refers).

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This is a brownfield site within the city centre which is allocated for a mixed use development (BCAP 37 refers). The site is highly sustainable in terms of its location particularly given its proximity to shops; jobs, services and facilities including sustainable transport modes. Set within the context of the requirement for a total of 26,400 homes in the city as a whole (policy BCS5 refers) between 2006 and 2026, and the provision of some 7, 400 of this within the City Centre (BCS2 refers), it is considered that in principle the proposed wholly residential use on this particular site is acceptable, subject of course to the proposals being acceptable in terms of the other material considerations addressed below.

**(B) IS THIS A SITE FOR A TALL BUILDING?**

It is proposed to erect a tall building on the site, comprising twenty four storeys, (including a lower ground floor parking area.) with the height of the ‘frame’ being 98.37 m AOD and the roof level of floor 24 being 92.2m AOD. If permission is granted this will be the tallest building in Bristol.

As well as the NPPF and development plan policies, current guidance with regard to Tall Buildings is found in the Authorities SPD1 Tall Buildings (January 2005), a tall building being defined as a building in the region of 9 + storeys, or buildings over 27 m high. Members might like to refer to page 16 of the SPD to compare the height of this proposal with other buildings within Bristol.

SPD 1 identifies a number of important panoramic views into the city centre as well as important views within the city centre itself. Amongst other things, drawing on a set of guiding principles (SPD 1 para 3.1) it provides an indication of areas that may be appropriate for a tall building (subject to meeting assessment criteria set out in para 5). The application site is within such an area. The SPD1 does not identify exact boundaries of sites that might be appropriate or establish appropriate heights; the onus is clearly on the applicant to provide a justification for the siting as well as the design of the tall building element of the scheme.

In light of the above the application was accompanied by a **Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) (Sept 2007)** and a **Tall Buildings Assessment (TBA)**. The TVIA is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape (landscape effect) as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity (visual effect). Landscape effect is defined in para 6.4 of the TVIA and assesses impact upon Castle Park; St Peter’s Church; the Banqueting Hall; Vegetation; Waterways; adjoining conservation areas and St Phillips and St Jacob Church. The Visual Effects are defined at para 6.5. and confined to the agreed Viewpoints of which there were 22. Members should be aware that when referring to an agreed viewpoint this is most representative view of a number of views that can be gained from that place or area; it is clearly not the only one. Overall the submitted TVIA is a rigorous analysis of those viewpoints; it describes the existing landscape / townscape conditions of the site and surrounding context and provides an analysis of its landscape / townscape value; visual characteristics and sensitivity. The impact assessment sets out the considered effects of the proposals and their significance (major, moderate or minor; adverse or beneficial). Tables at the end of the document (para 9) provide a useful summary of the effects. **The Tall Buildings Assessment (TBA)** follows the Assessment Criteria as set out in the SPD 1 (para 5.0) and explains how and why a tall building is justified.

The Authorities Landscape Design Officer has reviewed the submission and advises that “With regard to an overview of significant impacts from the majority of viewpoint locations, the development – the taller tower in particular - fits rather well in the viewing frame, in a number of cases complimenting the street scene by virtue of it providing a focus along or from a public highway - viewpoints 1, 3/3ex, 8, 9, 14/ 14 ex ,20 ; or by providing a contrast to existing built form - viewpoints 2, 13, 18, 19/19 ex. From some locations the view of the proposed tower provides contrast with regard to a soft landscape context – viewpoints 11, 15 , 21 / 21 ex, the latter obviously having far greater impact due to proximity, though still well placed within the viewing frame.

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The comments provided in the applicants TVIA descriptions generally conclude that the significance of effects, where not negligible, range from minor to major adverse. This is understandable as a degree of caution is necessary when dealing with the inclusion of a tall building within a townscape. However, the views above can be regarded in a more positive light because the proposal provides a dramatic intervention within the views which serves to enliven a vista or closer view within the context of a city centre location. Where view locations are close to the development much depends on the quality of the building detail – materials, rhythm and colour - and generally the proposals handle these aspects successfully”.

Out of the 22 viewpoints there are two locations which are considered to be more controversial; Viewpoint 10 from Old Market looking West and Viewpoint 22 at the junction of Temple Way and Broad Plain, looking west north-west, particularly with regard to its impact upon heritage assets and these views are given greater consideration in the Key Issue C below. The Old Market Community Organisation also consider that the tower will have even greater prominence than the Eclipse and Castlemead towers which they consider “ have a detrimental effect on the park, dominating the view eastwards from the western end and centre of the park and having the effect of making Castle Park appear much smaller than it is”. These comments relate to views 2, 14, 15 and 21.

This highly sustainable site is located within an area that is considered in principle to be appropriate for a tall building. It is considered that the TVIA demonstrates that a building of this height can be accommodated here within this sensitive topography and city skyline. If there is a site for a taller building within the central area it is considered that it is to be in this location given its proximity to the Park. The precise current siting reduces overshadowing of the public open space, as well as increasing legibility of the Baldwin Street / Old Market axis and defines a major gateway into the city. It could also be argued that it is closer to other tall residential and commercial clusters of tall buildings in this part of the city, (including Castlemead; the Marriot Hotel) and would therefore raise the quality and coherence of the cluster, albeit the Old Market Community Association are of the view that these two buildings are too far away to create a readable, visual link.

The impacts upon a number of heritage assets, including the Old Market Conservation Area and the St Phillip and St Jacob Church are recognised through this assessment. The SPD 1 as well as the Government through the NPPF and other guidance stresses that great weight be given to both the conservation of designated heritage assets, along with setting as well as the great importance of securing high – quality design. These matters are further considered below.

**(C) THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS UPON HERITAGE ASSETS.**

The Authority is required (under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Section 66 (1) of the same Act states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

A ‘heritage asset’ is defined in the NPPF (Annex2: Glossary) as “A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.” ‘Significance’ is defined (also in Annex 2) as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” The Setting of a heritage asset is defined within the NPPF (Annex 2) as “The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, and may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

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Section 12 of the national guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, with any harm or loss requiring clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

Policy BCS22 of the Bristol Development Framework, Core Strategy, seeks to ensure that development proposals safeguard or enhance heritage assets in the city and DM Policy 31 seek to ensure that development proposals safeguard or enhance the heritage assets in the city. Policy DM31 requires that "proposals affecting locally important heritage assets should ensure they are conserved having regard to their significance and the degree of harm or loss of significance". It goes on to state that "Where a proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset, including a locally listed heritage asset, or its wider historic setting, the applicant will be expected to amongst other things "demonstrate how the local character of the area will be respected."

A Heritage Statement (revised November 2017) was submitted with the application with the aim of setting out the heritage issues relating to the development. It correctly references the fact that there are seven listed buildings, one scheduled ancient monument and three conservation areas within a 200m radius of the study area which comprise the following:-

City and Queen Square Conservation Area which includes Castle Park; The Redcliffe Conservation Area and the Old Market Conservation Areas; the Church of St Philip & St Jacob (Grade II\*); Company House, Jacob Street (Grade II); The Vaulted Chambers, Castle Park – (Grade II) and also a Scheduled Ancient Monument; the remains of the Castle Keep, Castle Park (Grade II); the remains of the Castle Wall (Grade II); the former Tramway Generating Station (Grade II\*); and the former buildings of the Sheldon Bush and Patent Shot Company Limited, the Lead Shot Tower (Grade II).

The viewshed analysis has indicated the top of the tower will be visible from all statutory heritage assets within the 200m radius. In particular Old Market Street (conservation area) and a large area of Castle Park (conservation area) will have visibility. From the analysis undertaken the proposed tower may also be visible from parts of several other conservation areas within the city. Intervisibility analysis has indicated the presence of the proposed tower is unlikely to have a significant impact on views across the study area between the various heritage assets, since these are already highly restricted. Ultimately however the Statement concludes that in terms of the listed buildings the impacts in all cases are "negligible".

Officers have assessed the various submissions and have the following further comments in terms of those areas which are considered to have **significant impacts** upon both the conservation areas and listed buildings as designated heritage assets, all of which are concluded to be of less than substantial harm.

**(i) Significance of and Impact Upon Conservation Areas**

**Old Market Conservation Area** - As depicted in Viewpoint 10 of the TVIA the proposed tower is particularly prominent, framing the end of Old Market Street. The Old Market Community Organisation are of the view that this will be a highly detrimental intrusion onto the street scene, detracting from the Old Market Conservation Area and its many listed buildings, and dwarfing the Central Hall cupola, which is a local landmark" They are of the view that "a building the same height as One Castle Park would not have the same effect, but would be a continuation of the gently curving line of the southern side of Old Market Street".

The Authorities Landscape Architect considers that within this view the tower has the "attribute of providing a focus along an important highway". However it is recognised that "tower has a major impact on the Old Market Conservation Area through its overtopping of the listed buildings on Old

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Market including, in this view, the dome of Central Hall. The effect of the proposed development is to provide a visual stop to the perceived extent of the historic street line that currently segues into the mature tree canopy fronting the site. The contrast with the historic architecture is marked and on the basis of these observations, it is argued that the significance of effects is High Adverse, rather than Moderate Adverse as concluded in the TVIA summary". The Authorities Archaeological Officer is of the view that "the proposed development will have a significant, although less than substantial impact to the significance of this conservation area particularly in relation to the negative impact to the local locally listed landmark of the Central Hall".

**City and Queen Square Conservation Area** - The impact to the significance to this asset can be seen in viewpoints 1 and 2. In both cases the proposed development can be seen to cause a degree of harm, particularly in viewpoint 2, but this harm is less than substantial and will not overly change the character of the conservation area. Views 15 and 21 are considered to be less significant views and have less significant impact.

**(ii) Significance of and Impact Upon Listed Buildings**

**St Philip and St Jacob Church** - Viewpoint 22/22ex of the TVIA is from the southern footway, at the junction of Temple Way and Broad Plain, looking west. The issue in this view is the relationship between the proposed tower and historic tower of the grade II\* listed St. Phillip and St. Jacob Church. The Conservation Advisory Panel considers that the poor generic quality of the design is unworthy of its conspicuous location and would significantly harm nearby heritage assets and the wider landscape. Any public benefit derived from this scheme would not outweigh the significant harm it would cause; as such, the proposal is contrary to relevant Local Plan Policy and the NPPF".

The Authorities Landscape Architect considers that "despite there being a proportional area of sky preserved between the two structures the proximity of the proposal lessens the significance of the church tower, though interestingly this diminution appears lessened in the extended view. The impact on setting of a listed structure remains, though the TVIA assessment of Moderate Adverse significance is regarded as correct. The Authorities Archaeological Officer concludes that this viewpoint "shows a significant impact to the setting, although softened to an extent by the existing trees around the church. This viewpoint and setting of the church in this location is already compromised by the presence of Temple Way, therefore the impact of the development can be assessed as less than substantial".

**Church of St Peter in the centre of Castle Park** - The impact to this asset will also be less than substantial particularly as there will be few locations where the new development will be perceived within the setting of St Peters.

**Vaulted Chambers** - The impact to the significance of this asset is likely considered to be the most significant, although the proposal offers potential benefits for the improvement of the public realm in this location, thereby enhancing the setting of the asset.

Consequently this proposed development will cause less than substantial harm to the character and setting of a variety of heritage assets in the area. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework this harm will need to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, these should flow from the proposed development; they should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit (NPPF); they can be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress. These benefits are addressed in section L of this report, and the less than substantial harm to the heritage assets which have been identified here, have been given considerable importance and weight, in the balance of the final recommendation. This is of importance given that this harm gives rise to a strong presumption against planning permission being granted.

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The NPPF and NPPG identify good design as a key aspect of sustainable development and establish the importance of local distinctiveness. Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

The Bristol Core Strategy contains a number of policies relating to design that require development in the city centre to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance, function, conservation of heritage assets, sustainability and maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure and protecting key views (BCS2). In particular policy BCS21 'Quality Urban Design' requires development to deliver high quality urban design that contributes positively to an area's character and identity, through creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. Policy DM26 'Local Character and Distinctiveness' further reinforces the importance of local character and distinctiveness; it lists a number of general design principles that contribute towards this. Also material to assessing the design of the proposal are policies DM27 'Layout and Form' which requires development to have a quality urban design that results in healthy, safe and sustainable places; DM28 'Public Realm' which requires that development creates or contributes to safe, attractive, high quality, inclusive and legible public realm that contributes positively to local character and identity and DM29 'Design of New Buildings' which requires new buildings to be designed to a high standard, setting criteria to assist in achieving this. Overall both local policy and national guidance (section 7 of the NPPF) recognises the importance of good design meaning development will not be permitted where it would be harmful to the local character and distinctiveness

More specifically within the Bristol Central Area Plan (BCAP) the site is a designated key site (KS05) and the related policy (BCAP 37), expects the site to provide the following:-

- . A strong relationship with Castle Park providing natural surveillance and active frontages onto Castle Street, Queen Street and Tower Hill;
- . An improved gateway to Castle Park from Castle Street / Queen Street including measures to reduce the impact of traffic along these streets such as shared space solutions;
- . An improved approach to Castle Park from the southeast
- . Opportunities to explore enhancements to the vaulted chambers of Bristol Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument within Castle Park and the Godwin Building fronting Marybush Lane;
- . An appropriate response to the archaeological interest represented by the Castle Ditch / Moat running below the site. Opportunities should be explored to reveal this heritage asset and incorporate it into the development.

#### Layout

The layout of the site and location of the main buildings reinforces the street frontages of Castle Street, Queen Street, Mary Bush lane and Tower Hill. The site aspect has necessitated some concerns about the potential overshadowing of Castle Street, and the form of the building has been further developed in order to limit the extent of overshadowing, reduce the number of north facing units and to mitigate as much as possible for the north facing aspect of the main block.

The current scheme identifies the line of the culverted moat as a private amenity space with some visual access at both ends; it is not a public route. This approach is not supported by OMCA who consider that there is "a very strong desire line from the end of Jacob Street to the main path crossing Castle Park, as the path worn in the grass short cutting the Castle Street/Tower Hill corner shows. Additionally there is a strong case for a north/south route through the site from the Queen Street/Marybush Lane corner to Castle Street, opposite the vaulted chambers; this would form a direct

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route from Counterslip Bridge across Castle Park to Cabot Circus". On this point CDG officers conclude that "the urban block is relatively small and duplicating an east west route would weaken the emphasis on an improved pedestrian and cycling environment along Castle Street". The BUDF original comments highlight the need to assess pedestrian routes and be clear about the role of this open space. This conforms to the current proposal which suggests an unambiguous private space. With regard to the culvert itself the applicants advise that the opening up of the culvert is not possible and as such it was concluded that the scheme should make explicit the historic attributes of the site in landscape terms.

### Massing

The principle of a tall building on this site has been addressed in Key Issues B and C. With regard to remainder of the northern blocks the balance and approach to the massing of these buildings onto Castle Street are considered appropriate given the juxtaposition of the Park which assists in justifying the higher density approach to the development. The building form toward the south of the site has appropriately been designed as a lower building ranging between 4 and 6 storeys. This helps to create a better relationship and more sensitive response to existing buildings including Pip 'n' Jay Church and historic buildings along Passage Street. The height of the building close to Tower Hill has been increased by a storey to increase the number of affordable units in this location

### Design

With regard to the northern blocks (A, B and C), including the tower the design approach reinforces the elements of the blocks with a more distinctive use of materials between the three identifiable building elements. Located in the lower ground floor is the residents car park and some cycle parking accessed via an entrance and exit from Queen Street and linked to the upper floors by stair core and lifts. On the upper floor of Block C (the tower) is a communal residential area.

The CDG advise that the tower will be visually prominent from a number of locations and its detailed design needs to respond to both long and closer views. Comments principally by the BUDF about making the appearance of the tower more distinctive have led to design development post the pre-application discussions. As a result the appearance of the tower has been amended by adjusting the cladding and arrangement of materials, taking the visual support away from the corners of the building intermittently. Whilst CDG colleagues were of the initial view that this weakens the elegance of the design and understates the vertical emphasis it is considered that at the final material and detailing stage the effect at the corners needs to be carefully considered to ensure that the glazed corners are not totally indistinguishable from the background sky and a degree of definition / elegance achieved.

With regard to the southern block this design has been amended following officer advice, essentially in order to break up the mass of the blocks to increase its sense of terrace and respond better to the fine grain of the surrounding buildings. Further development of the landscape treatment along the base of the building and the addition of the proposed street trees will further help to integrate the building successfully into the wider townscape.

In terms of the surrounding the CDG share much of the aspiration to see improvements to Castle Street and the eastern edge of the park. Visualisations within the current application do indicate ways in which the park landscape is opened up which would conform to this thinking. The solution around Castle Street currently has a degree of compromise as a result of existing parking and movement constraints and there may well be more that can be done to produce a better solution taking on broad public concerns including the points raised by OMCA and aspirations within the neighbourhood plan potentially using CIL monies collected as part of this development.

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In accordance with policies BCS9, BCS11, DM15 and DM17, green infrastructure, including trees and ecology on development sites should be safeguarded and enhanced where possible. Where this is not possible, developer contributions should be taken to provide for mitigation of losses, in accordance with policy BCS11 and the Planning Obligations SPD.

The application is supported by an **Arboricultural Assessment** (March 2017) which is based on a survey undertaken in October 2016. Eighteen trees are present on the site, nine of which are Category A; 6 Category B and 3 Category C. The trees along the northern boundary of the site, a group of London Plane and Norway Maple trees, represent a valuable amenity asset at the edge and entrance to Castle Park within this highly urbanised part of the city. Along with the single London plane tree located to the south west these are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

In order to accommodate the development four trees have been agreed to be removed; the large mature London plane tree located at the junction of Queen Street and Marybush lane (T17 – Category B), a London Plane tree in the north west corner at the junction of Queen Street and Castle Street (T15 – Category A) and also an ornamental cherry and wild cherry located along Tower Hill (T18 & 19; Category C).

In terms of the proposals the applicants have maximised the provision of green infrastructure within the constraints of the site, particularly given the presence of the culvert. Following a request from officers and further examination of the utilities, an additional 6 street trees are to be planted along Queen Street and Marybush Lane. Tree Pit Details (665-C-2-210) have been submitted showing how these new trees, will be able to accommodate service runs. In accordance with the Tree Replacement Scheme 23 trees are to be replaced. The scheme proposes the re planting of a total of 18 trees which comprise 1 x London Plane, 4 x River Birch, 5 x Tulip tree, 4 x Dogwood, 4 x Stag's Horn Sumach, albeit these are to be finalised, through the imposition of a condition. Given the Horn Sumach (in raised planters) is considered more of a shrub they are not to be counted in the calculation. 9 trees are therefore to be mitigated for which equates to £29,869.92 (£3,318.88 x9 ) to be secured by S106 Agreement.

Given the risk to the trees, particularly in relation to the proximity of the tower development, and at the request of officers the applicants have submitted further information with regard to **the tree protection measures** of the canopy and roots of retained trees, during construction and how the footbridge can be realistically constructed.

The application was accompanied by an **Ecological Appraisal Survey** (March 2017). A desk study and an extended Phase 1 Survey was carried out on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016. There are no statutory designated sites within 2 km of the site boundary and nine non statutory sites within 1 km which are listed in the report. However it is concluded and officers concur that these sites are not materially affected by the proposals. With the exception of trees the other habitats within the site were regarded as having negligible conservation value, with the subterranean culvert has some potential to support roosting bats and otters. Conditions are to be attached to any permission to mitigate impacts which includes the provision of bat and bird boxes and appropriate brown roof habitats.

**(F) TENURE TYPE AND MIX**

Section 6 of the NPPF reflects the need to significantly boost the supply of housing and to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. Policy BSC18 of the adopted Core Strategy reflects this guidance and states that "all new residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities" In the first instance developments are required to address affordable housing need and housing demand across the city under this policy, which is further addressed in the preceding policy

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BCS17. Ultimately development 'should aim to' contribute to the diversity of housing in the local area and help to redress any housing imbalance that exists; respond to the requirement of a changing population and employ imaginative design solutions. Policy BCAP3 Bristol Central Area specifically addresses the requirement for more family sized homes in the central wards, the relevant definition here being "flats with three or more bedrooms and an element of usable outdoor amenity space". Policy OMC5 states 'Proposals for dwellings suitable for occupation by families and having at least three bedrooms will be encouraged' In all cases consideration must be given to the issue of harmful concentrations where the choice of housing is reduced and no longer provides for the needs of different groups in the community.

Bristol comprises a diverse range of residential neighbourhoods with significant variations in housing type, tenure, size, character and quality. A wide range of factors influence the housing needs and demands of neighbourhoods. Such factors include demographic trends, housing supply, economic conditions and market operation. The inter-relationship between these and other factors is often complex and dynamic. In the circumstances, housing requirements will differ greatly across the city and will be subject to change over time. With this in mind an overly prescriptive approach to housing mix would not be appropriate. However, it has been possible to identify broad housing issues that are applicable to many neighbourhoods.

In terms of the existing housing profile and mix for the Central ward census data indicates that currently the mix regarding flats/ maisonettes or apartments versus houses is 91.8 % / 7.9%. In terms of tenure 54% are private rented; 27% social rented and 16.6% are privately owned. The majority of homes are 1 bed (43.3 %) and 2 bed (33.7%) with the remainder comprising 3 bed (9.3%); 4 bed (4.8%) and 5 bed (7.8%). These figures are generally reflected at the more detailed Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) with private rented, 1 and 2 bedroomed homes dominating with family housing in limited supply.

The table below sets out the proposed tenure and size of units with regard to the current scheme.

**Provision**

	<b>Affordable</b>		<b>PRS</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Studio (1P)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>1 Bed (2P)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>2 Bed (3P)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>2 Bed (4P)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>3 Bed (4P)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

In terms of **tenure** 20% of the homes are to be affordable and 80% private rented. The affordable housing element will clearly contribute towards the needs of the city and are welcome. The level of contribution is considered further in Key Issue J. In terms of the private rented provision, members will see that 54% of properties in the ward are already privately rented and as such the contribution that the development makes to the tenure mix of housing within the area is questioned. It is however recognised that this new build scheme provides a different offer than the traditional private rented housing sector, given the fact that it is purpose built with significant emphasis being placed on the user experience and communal environment. It is a format new to Bristol (with the exception of one other scheme) and one that is encouraged by Central Government as part of the drive to address the overall housing situation.

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In terms of the **size of units** members can see that there are a number of studio apartments, and 1 and 2 bedroomed apartments. In terms of studio apartments these have been resisted on other major schemes within the city given that their size and configuration means that they are not adaptable and therefore sustainable. In addition and overall the scheme does not provide for any family accommodation as defined within the development plan policy. This is one of the concerns raised by the OMCA who state that “we would have hoped that this would be an ideal opportunity to create these much needed larger dwellings that could potentially house families within the city centre”.

Ultimately, whilst the scheme provides a welcome element of affordable housing and a different private rental offer, the proposals fail to redress the housing imbalance that exists within the city centre in terms of providing an element of family accommodation. As such and on this issue the proposals are not strictly policy compliant and must be weighed in the balance within any decision.

**(G) AMENITIES OF EXISTING AND FUTURE OCCUPIERS**

In delivering high quality urban design new development should safeguard the amenity of existing development and its occupiers and create a high-quality environment for future occupiers, which is also safe, healthy and useable (Policy BCS21 refers). Policy BCS23 of the Core Strategy addresses the issue of different forms of pollution, including noise and air pollution. Policy DM33 and DM35 are clear that development will not be permitted if mitigation cannot be provided to an appropriate standard with regard to air quality and noise pollution amongst other things.

The site is set within a tight urban context and typically surrounded by a mixture of uses. Given the scale of the development proposed, the following issues must be given due consideration and weighed in the balance, when assessing the development proposals: – the impact of the proposals upon daylight / sunlight; overshadowing; whether the development would be overbearing on adjoining occupiers and / or create unacceptable levels of overlooking; whether the layout provides for an environment which feels safe; the nature and space of the residential units being created; addressing any issues of noise and disturbance. Taking these factors into account the following assessment has been made, firstly with regard to existing occupiers / premises and secondly upon future occupiers.

**(i) Existing Occupiers / Premises**

**Daylight / Sunlight**– A Daylight and Sunlight Assessment (May 2017) was submitted in support of the application. Using the published guidelines of the Building Research Establishments ‘Site Layout planning for Daylight and Sunlight’ 2011 this reports examines , through established methodology, the impact of the development upon the levels of daylight and sunlight that existing residents will receive. The BRE Report advises that daylight levels should be assessed for the main habitable rooms of neighbouring residential properties. Habitable rooms in residential properties are defined as kitchens, living rooms and dining rooms. Bedrooms are less important as they are mainly occupied at night time. It is important to note that the advice contained within the BRE Report is guidance only, it is not mandatory and that ultimately there is a degree of judgement to be made and consideration of neighbourliness.

In this particular case Kings Orchard, Queen Street; 2 Queen Street; Marybush Lane Health Centre; One Castle Park, Ferrymans Court and Bristol Marriott Hotel were assessed. Impacts are defined on page 7 of the report, most of which are concluded to be negligible to minor adverse with the exception of One Castle Park , which is assessed to be a moderate adverse impact, however this is a commercial building where at the western façade is likely to serve ancillary spaces and main reception areas. Officers concur with this view.

**Overshadowing / Overlooking and Overbearing** - Objections have been raised with regard to the impact of the tall element in terms of overshadowing over Castle Park and lower Old Market Street. It is inevitable that a building of this scale will result in overshadowing but the decision to site the building in the north east corner of the site was in part minimize the inevitable overshadowing of the

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park, neighbouring buildings and the rest of the site. The Design and Access Statement illustrates this through the Tower Sun Path Analysis.

With regard to the other relationships between the existing and proposed developments on these are all considered acceptable given the nature of the uses (existing and proposed) and are ultimately typical of a city centre relationship.

**(ii) Future Occupiers**

The flats comply with the **National Space Standards**. In terms of accessibility policy DM2 requires that 2% or more of the homes to be **wheelchair accessible**, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users. In this scheme 98% of the units are compliant with Building Regulation M4(2) (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings) and the remaining 2% are compliant with Building Regulation M4(3) (Wheelchair User Dwellings). 5% of the parking spaces (2 spaces) are DDA compliant and are thus policy compliant.

The **Daylight and Sunlight Assessment** for the development itself confirms that the building performs well in terms of the provision of daylight and sunlight (results on page 11 of the Assessment) due in part to the minimisation of the level of single aspect and also north facing units. A Health Impact Assessment was submitted in support of the application and highlights amongst other things, that all residents will benefit from the carefully designed amenity areas provided within the courtyard and roof terrace level (designed with seating, play and planting areas), the details of which are provided within the landscape and Public Realm submission. Residents will also benefit from safe and secure access with a dedicated concierge and safe and secure cycle parking and car parking.

An **Air Quality Assessment** (May 2017) was submitted in support of the application given the site is located within the identified Air Quality Management Area, the main purpose of which was to determine if facades of the proposed development will be exposed to high levels of pollution from the surrounding roads and to assess the construction air quality impacts. Subject to the imposition of a number of conditions on any permission the proposals do not generate any significant air quality impact and the new exposure introduced is all below the relevant air quality objectives and as such the proposals are acceptable.

A **Noise Planning Report** (May 2017) was submitted in support of the application which provides preliminary design advice relating to the sound insulation and ventilation design of the façades. The majority of facades have been deemed to fall into the 'Low to Medium Noise Exposure' categories and would therefore be suitable for natural ventilation or suitable acoustic trickle ventilation. A minority of apartments on the eastern facade, deemed to fall in the 'High Noise Exposure' category may require a more robust glazing and assisted acoustic trickle ventilation scheme, the details of which are to be conditioned should permission be granted.

**(H) TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS****Policy Context**

The NPPF at paras 29 – 41 address the issue of promoting sustainable transport measures. The site is in a highly sustainable location very well served by an extensive rail and bus network and within walking distance of the main shopping area with associated services and facilities and employment opportunities. As such and in highway terms the proposed high density residential scheme such as this, as it would in accordance with Policy BCS20 of the Core Strategy. Policies BCS10, BSC11, DM23 and DM27, DM32 and BCAP29 are relevant and reference below.

In support of the application a revised Transport Statement (Oct 2017) was submitted which proposes the following:-

**Development Control Committee B – 20 December 2017****Application No. 17/04267/F: Former Central Ambulance Station Marybush Lane Bristol BS2 0JB****Traffic Impact**

With the exception of Tower Hill, which provides a strategic city centre function, the surrounding highway network is considered to be lightly trafficked. With regard to trip generation it is advised that the proposals would have a total of 35 two way vehicle trips in the AM peak and 48 two way movements in the PM peak which equates to 19% of the mode share which is considered acceptable by the TDM team (Table 5 pge 13 of TS). This represents a significant decrease in vehicular trips compared to the recent use as a public car park.

**Travel Plan**

Initially a Framework Travel Plan (FTP) and subsequently a Full Travel Plan was submitted as part of the application. The latter is considered to have a number of omissions and as such a Full Travel Plan will be conditioned on any permission. A Travel Plan Management and Audit Fee of £5,000 is required to be secured through a s.106 Agreement.

**Sustainable Transport**

The Transport Statement advises that 56% of trips will be made on foot and 17% of trips will utilise public transport. There are three bus stops within 400m walking distance of the site, on Broad Weir to the north; Temple Way to the east and Old Market Street to the northeast, all of which provide a high frequency bus service. The site is also within walking distance of the MetroBus stops at Cabot Circus, Broadmead and Temple Meads.

A contribution of £20,000 is required to assist in the Improvement to the southbound bus shelter on the Temple Way slip road from Old Market Roundabout to A4044 Temple Way - £20,000

**Car Parking**

A total of 36 residential car parking spaces (7 are electric charging and 2 DDA compliant) are proposed with the basement of the development under Blocks A, B and C, to be accessed from Queen Street. Whilst the proposals would be required to provide a total of 404 spaces in accordance with BCC's standards, (BCAP 29 refers) this is considered to be acceptable given the sustainable site location and level of cycle parking that is to be provided, a flexibility which the policy provides for in appropriate city centre locations.

In terms of street parking, the proposal will result in the loss of 7 some Pay and Display spaces on the northern side of Castle Street which currently includes a car club space. To compensate for the loss of these spaces the applicants have provided eight parallel spaces on the eastern side of Temple Back, to be secured through the s.106 Agreement and the car club parking space is to be relocated on the southern side of Castle Street.

**Walking and Cycling and Cycle Parking**

Given the central location there is a well- established network of pedestrian routes in the vicinity with access to an array of amenities. Each block has a dedicated pedestrian access from the adjacent perimeter highway. All footways surrounding the site will be of a minimum of 2.0 m in width with appropriate tactile paving and associated works at key junctions.

In terms of cycling, amongst other things, the National Cycle Route 4 is easily accessed as well as other routes (see Fig 4 of the TA). In accordance with the BCC minimum cycle parking standards (BCAP 29 refers) of at least 590 spaces are required, to include 38 visitor spaces. The proposals provide 514 spaces with 36 visitor spaces, which equates to 87% of this requirement. Residents cycle parking is provided within the central courtyard within a secured and overlooked space, the visitor cycle parking is provided along parts of the perimeter highway. Having regard to the central

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location and the proximity to other modes of transport in this instance this level of cycle parking is considered to be acceptable. The applicants advise that the Travel Plan will monitor this provision but consider this to be sufficient, citing other calculation methods such as Sustrans report, albeit for existing situation. The cycle storage is to be a mixture of 'josta' two tiered cycle racks supplemented by Sheffield Stands. TDM require a higher proportion of the cycle parking to comprise the latter given that the former are not accessible to all.

Since the submission and as a consequence of a requirement by officers for the affordable housing units to have direct access to the central courtyard, there is a loss of a further 24 cycle parking spaces, but the benefits of this access are considered to outweigh this loss.

**Highway and Public Realm Improvements**

A number of highway infrastructure and public realm improvement works are proposed and are detailed in the Transport Statement (Oct 2017) at para 5.3. These works are focussed on improving access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists while maintaining key traffic function. These include the installation of a signal controlled crossing on Tower Hill, works to regulate and resurface the carriageway from Lower Castle Street to the counterslip junction, and resurfacing the full extent of Tower Hill; modifications to Tower Hill to create a two – way segregated cycle route between Narrow Plan and a new pedestrian / cycle crossing to the north of Tower Hill and the reversing of the one way restriction along Marybush Lane and the widening of Castle Street footway by 2.0 m. These works are acceptable and will be secured via a S278 agreement, through the appropriate condition. At the request of the Development Management Engineering team the applicant has also confirmed that a comprehensive lighting design will be provided, also to be secured via a planning condition.

**Construction Traffic Management Plan** - A Construction Management Plan (May 2017) was submitted in support of the application. The development is to be constructed in one phase over a period of 30 – 36 months. Access and egress is to be gained from Tower Hill with typically no more than 8 HGV vehicles per day with no more than 2 per hour. Wheel washing facilities and power jet washers are to be provided to address mud on the road and dust issues. Further consideration is required in terms of the operating hours (currently stipulated to be between 07:30 to 18:00 Mon to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturday with no noisy activities on Sundays of BH,s) and the mitigation of dust and as such a further Construction Management Plan – revised is required and will be conditioned.

**(I) OTHER ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

**i) Sustainability Credentials-** In accordance with policies BCS13, BCS14, BCS15, BCS16 and BCAP20, BCAP 21 and BCAP 25, developments must be sustainable in terms of their construction practices, energy use and efficiency and should generate energy from renewable sources to further offset their impacts. Policies

Accompanying the proposals is a Sustainability Strategy (Sept 2017) which outlines the sustainable credentials of the proposed development, highlighting the opportunities to reduce its environmental impact in accordance with the above policies. An Energy Strategy (Sept 2017) was also submitted which confirms the design measures which reduce the energy consumption and associated carbon emissions and minimise reliance on active building systems. It is proposed that the development will be connected to the Bristol City Heat Network, which will provide the development with low carbon heating and hot water. Based on current fuel mix information this will result in a carbon reduction of approximately 55% from the Part L baseline development. A further residual carbon reduction of 20% will then be achieved through renewable technologies in the form of PV panels to be installed on the roof of the development.

**ii) Flood Risk and Drainage – A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (May 2017)** was submitted in support of the application.

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Essentially the site is currently identified as being within Flood Zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding. In order to mitigate flood risk in the future the residential development of the lower blocks will be set at 10.8 m AOD and higher for the northern blocks following the natural topography of the site. The site is crossed by the Castle Ditch culvert, classified as a Main River, which itself forms an element of flood risk, the protection of which has influenced the development and design of this site, with piled foundation either side and new concrete beams spanning across it, with the pedestrian / courtyard zone above all of which have been discussed with the Environment Agency whom raise no objections to the proposals. Surface water is to be discharged into the culvert, mainly clean water from the roof or pedestrianised areas having regard to the SUDS hierarchy which is an improvement upon the current situation whereby it currently discharges into combined sewers.

iii) **Fire Safety** – albeit a Building Regulation (Part B) issue officers can advise members that within the submitted Tall Buildings Assessment is a Fire Strategy Overview and a Review of the Fire Strategy within the Design and Access Statement ( para 6.13), which sets out the fire safety credentials of the scheme following engagement with the Avon Fire and Rescue Service.

**(J) PLANNING OBLIGATIONS**

New development often creates a need for additional or improved community services and facilities, without which there could be a detrimental effect on local amenity and the quality of the environment. Planning obligations are the mechanism by which measures are secured to enhance the quality of both the development and the wider environment, to help ensure that the development makes a positive contribution to sustainable development providing social, economic and environmental benefits to the community as a whole.

The legislative framework for planning obligations is set out in Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 12 of the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act. Further legislation is set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy CIL Regulations (2010) (as amended). The NPPF reiterates the tests (at paras 203 to 205) that are required to be met when planning obligations are sought, namely that they should be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development and, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. It goes on to advise at para 205 that “where obligations are being sought or revised, local planning authorities should take account of changes in market conditions over time and, wherever appropriate, be sufficiently flexible to prevent planned development being stalled”.

Supplementary Planning Document entitled ‘Planning Obligations’ (2012) sets out the Council’s overall approach to planning obligations and the types of obligation that the Council may seek to secure and complements BCS 11.

**(i) Affordable Housing**

Paras 47 to 55 of the NPPF address the issues surrounding the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes and para 50 specifically addresses the issue of affordable housing, requiring local planning authorities to set policies to address particular needs.

Policy BCS17 of the Core Strategy states that development in the Bristol Inner East Area will be required to provide 40% on – site affordable housing (77% social rent and 23% shared ownership), subject to scheme viability. The needs assessment, undertaken in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, identifies a need for 29,100 dwellings across the Wider Bristol HMA over the 20 – year plan period (2016 – 36). There is also a significant need for social rented housing and a need for both family and smaller affordable homes.

The scheme proposes 20 % affordable housing and in order to justify this lower provision the applicants submitted a **Viability Report (August 2017)**.

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Government policy and guidance is very clear that scheme viability is a key consideration in determining the level of affordable housing that a development can provide, and that Council's should not require a level of affordable housing that would render a development unviable. The government's Planning Practice Guidance states as follows:

*Where affordable housing contributions are being sought, obligations should not prevent development from going forward. (Para 004 Reference ID: 23b-004-20140306)*

In simple terms, a development is considered to be viable if the Residual Land Value (RLV) of the development is greater than the Site Value.

The RLV is calculated by ascertaining the value of the completed development, and subtracting from this all the costs involved in bringing the development forward (e.g. build costs, professional fees, legal costs, financing costs etc.) and the developers profit. All inputs are based on present day costs and values.

The proposed development is very different from the vast majority of residential developments that are required to provide affordable housing. Usually, residential developments are based on schemes where the properties are sold on the open market. However in this case the development is a Private Rental Sector (PRS) scheme, meaning that the properties will be rented on leases of varying terms by the site owner. In addition the scheme will contain high quality communal facilities the use of which is included in the rent.

As PRS is a very different model from usual residential developments, its viability is assessed in a different way. Rather than a predicted sales value, the annual rental value is used and an investment valuation (yield) is applied to ascertain the value of the scheme. PRS schemes are also less risky than schemes where properties are sold on the open market and therefore a lower profit margin would be expected.

In the case of the former Ambulance Station Site, the City Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are the Landowners.

The applicant has agreed to purchase the site from the Landowners for the sum £3,050,000. The site is 1.67 acres in size, which results in a Site Value of approximately £1,800,000 per acre. This is lower than would be expected for a City Centre Site and it reflects the fact there are very significant abnormal costs including works to a culvert running under the site. Given the low price on a per acre basis, and given that the Council and the HCA are the Landowners it is considered that the purchase price is reasonable and should be considered as an appropriate Site Value.

The applicant has offered to provide 20% affordable housing. Savills, on behalf of the applicant, have submitted a viability report claiming that when 20% affordable housing is provided the scheme delivers a profit of only 5.24% of Gross Development Value (GDV). Whilst the applicant has stated that they would be prepared to proceed on this basis due to being both the contractor and the developer, it is acknowledged that this is not a profit level that would be acceptable in the wider market.

Officers have commissioned BNP Paribas to assess the viability information and advise the Council as to whether the applicants claim is reasonable. BNP Paribas have assessed the values and costs associated with the development, and liaised with Savills where further clarity has been required in respect of certain inputs.

BNP Paribas consider that for a PRS scheme such as this one, the benchmark profit should be 15% of GDV for the open market properties and 6% for the affordable ones. When 20% affordable housing is provided this provides a blended benchmark profit of 13.88% of GDV.

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BNP Paribas agreed with many of the inputs contained in the Savills Report. Those areas where BNP Paribas differ from Savills are set out in the following table:

Base Build Costs	BNP Paribas consider that the Base Build Costs contained in the Savills Report are too high. BNP Paribas have included costs totalling £52,418,278, whereas the Savills Report includes costs totalling £57,348,154.
Build Period	BNP Paribas considered the Build Period contained in the Savills Report is too long. BNP Paribas have included a Build Period of 24 months, whereas the Savills Report includes a Build Period of 32 months.

When BNP Paribas ran their appraisal based on their view of Base Build Costs and Build Period, including a Site Value of £3,050,000 and 20% affordable housing, they concluded that the scheme returned a profit of 12.34% profit on GDV. This is lower than the benchmark profit of 13.88%, and consequently BNP Paribas conclude that the scheme is unable to provide any more than 20% affordable housing and that the applicants offer of 20% affordable provision should be accepted.

Consequently, officers recommend that the provision of 75 affordable dwellings (20%) be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.

An **Affordable Housing Statement** (Oct 2017) was submitted in support of the application which sets out the affordable housing offer for the scheme. Of the 75 affordable homes proposed, 58 (77%) are to be affordable rented and 17 (23 %) intermediate, shared ownership, comprising a mix of 45, 1 bed; 29 2 bed and 1, 3 bed unit.

The 58 affordable rented housing units will comprise affordable rented flats which will be owned by a Registered Provider and let as affordable rent. This form of affordable housing allows occupiers to pay a rent equivalent to the maximum level of Local Housing Allowance for each property type and will include service charge (allowing for annual inflation at CPI plus 1%). The 17 intermediate units will be offered as shared ownership flats under long leases incorporating the HCA standard clauses. Occupiers will be able to purchase an initial equity share in the property (of 25%-75%) and pay a residual rent capped at 2.75% on the remaining retained equity. Occupiers may purchase additional shares in the home at a future date up to 100% ownership. The Authorities Housing Team are satisfied that the approach set out in the revised Affordable Housing Statement is acceptable (subject to the justification of a 20% provision - see below, to be secured through a s. 106 Agreement).

Thus in respect of the affordable housing provision the requirement is for 58 homes which are to be for affordable rent and 17 homes which are to be for shared ownership.

**(ii) Highway Infrastructure Works**

As referenced in Key Issue H of the report the following mitigation is required:-

Improvement to the southbound bus shelter on the Temple Way slip road from Old Market Roundabout to A4044 Temple Way - £20,000

The provision of eight parallel car parking spaces along the eastern side of Temple Back - to be made available when those spaces on Castle Street are lost.

Travel Plan and Management Audit Fee - £5,000 – payable upon the commencement of the development.

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As referenced in Key Issue E of the report the following mitigation is required:-

£29,869.92

**(iv) Sustainability – District Heating Network**

There is an aspiration that the development will connect to the District Heating Network. In the event however that this is not available at the critical stage of the development construction the legal agreement needs to provide for a reversion to CHP.

**(v) Legal Costs**

The developer shall pay all of the Councils legal costs with respect to negotiation, preparation and completion of both the Heads of Terms and S106 Agreement for this application, whether or not the same shall proceed to completion.

**COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

The CIL liability for this development is £2,593,518.75, however social housing relief may be claimed on those residential dwellings included in the development that are to be managed by a Housing Association for the provision of affordable housing.

**CONCLUSION**

At Key Issue C of the report identifies, the proposals will result in less than substantial harm to a number of heritage assets; one of the main causes for concern amongst amenity groups identified earlier in the report. These impacts must be given considerable weight and importance as they give rise to a strong presumption against permission being granted. The question that needs to be addressed is whether there are other material planning consideration and public benefits that are sufficient to outweigh this strong presumption against planning permission being granted

This is a key city centre site which is allocated for development within the Bristol Central Area Plan (March 2015); it has been vacant for a number of years and has been cleared since January 2016. Given its very central location the site is highly sustainable, within close proximity to shops, jobs, services and facilities as well as other sustainable travel modes. Set also within the context of the housing needs of Bristol a wholly residential is considered acceptable. The high density of the scheme enables the efficient use of this brownfield site and will provide 300 private rented homes and 75 affordable homes, which are a welcome contribution to the identified housing needs of the city, of clear public benefit. In respect of the Private Rental homes these represent a new offer for the city of Bristol; contributing to tenure diversity in the housing market.

In addition the proposals will bring social economic benefits to both the city centre and Bristol as a whole; it will provide Bristol with a new vibrant residential offer which will contribute to the vitality and viability of the City, the benefits of which will be realised during construction (with a high number of jobs created) and afterward with the additional resident population, bringing in new skills, local spending power and assisting in the long – term competitiveness of Bristol.

The proposals include a tall building element which if consented and built would be the tallest building in the city of Bristol. Having regard to relevant policies and guidance members will see from the report that the site is considered suitable for a tall building and following the submission of a Tall Buildings Assessment and a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, it is also concluded that the building of

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the scale proposed can be accommodated within this sensitive topography and city skyline. Its proximity to the Park is considered one of the key factors which make this site particularly suitable for a tall building, increasing legibility and providing a strong relationship with the park, resulting in better natural surveillance at this end as well as providing in part, visually active frontages onto Castle Street, all of which has considerable public benefit. It is also considered that the tall building will read appropriately with the small cluster of tall buildings within close proximity.

In terms of the proposed layout and design officers are satisfied that the proposals are of high quality, and respond well to this urban context. The lack of any family housing is regretted albeit that in terms of tenure this proposal provides a different offer to the city. In terms of the sustainable credentials of the scheme, it is proposed, amongst other things that the development will be connected to the Bristol City Heat Network if it is available for connection at the appropriate time. The applicants have maximised the provision of green infrastructure within the constraints of the site and the layout and design provides for all future residents to have access to generous areas of well -designed internal and external amenity space. The scheme also proposes the provision of a number of additional street trees which will be of public benefit to this area and, in addition to the bat and bird boxes and brown roofs proposed, will provide additional habitats for wildlife.

Another public benefit beyond the site is that of the proposed improvements to the surrounding highway network / public realm which will result in improvements to cycling and pedestrian environment / movements and improve permeability into Castle Park, the details of which are set out in Key Issue H.

For the reasons given above it is considered that the other material considerations and public benefit factors are sufficient to outweigh the strong presumption against planning permission being granted given the identified, less than substantial, harm to a number of heritage assets. As such the proposals are recommended for approval subject to a s106 Legal Agreement and the imposition of a number of conditions in order to mitigate any impacts.

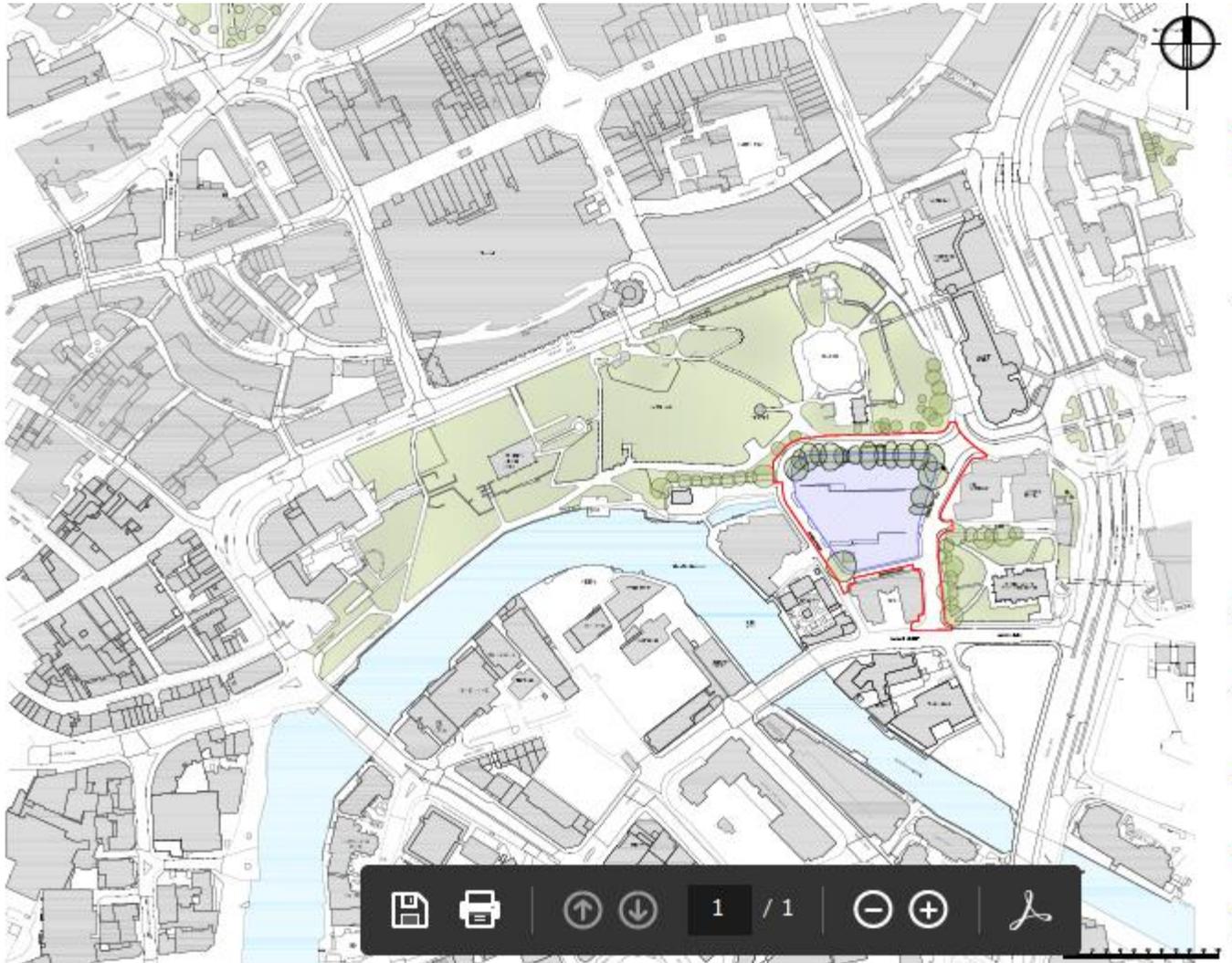
**RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE APPLICANTS ENTERING INTO A S106 AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO SECURE THE OBLIGATIONS AS SET OUT IN KEY ISSUE J OF THE REPORT AND SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:-**

THE CONDITIONS ARE NOT YET FINALISED AND WILL BE REPORTED IN FULL ON THE AMENDMENT SHEET TO FOLLOW PRIOR TO THE COMMITTEE.

## Supporting Documents

### **1. Former Central Ambulance Station, Marybush Lane**

1. Site location plan
2. Ground floor plan
3. Proposed elevations
4. Proposed street view
5. Proposed Queen Street elevation
6. Proposed Marybush/Tower Hill elevation
7. Proposed Marybush/Queen Street elevation
8. Castle park view



# Ground Floor







# Queen Street



# Marybush / Tower Hill



# Marybush / Queen St



CASTLE PARK VIEW

TOWER

CASTLEMEAD TOWER

MARRIOTT HOTEL

