

Carriageworks and Westmoreland House Consultation

Notes on Workshop 1 - Generating Options, held on 1st August 2013

Participants

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Apologies

Caroline Hughes	KHA
Beverly Tattersfield	Montpelier Conservation Group
John Frenkel	Kingsdown Conservation Group

1. Introduction

There were brief presentations about how gcp Architects will use the ideas from the workshop inform the development of options for the site; the CPO and the procurement process; and the work of Knightstone Housing on the final stage of the procurement process.

2. Activity 1: Generating ideas

Participants were invited to visit five themed areas taken from the CAG vision document, and contribute their ideas about the principles that were important in each aspect of the development. Comments were written on large sheets and grouped.

2.1 Community Uses and Ground Floor

NO more

- No more retail/shop alcohol outlets

Housing/active frontages

- Family houses at the rear of site ideally with separate front doors and with front and rear gardens.
- Want to see active uses on all ground floor frontages – residential frontages should have front doors and small garden areas for each unit, not large blocks of flats

Daytime or night time?

- Day time economy not night time
- 24 hour Public Access – natural surveillance from houses

Local Employment

- Employment in the build process

Flexibility of use/letting

- Serviceable units
- Future proof – adaptability, flexibility
- Business space must be viable – size, servicing etc
- Commercial as well as retail units on the whole frontage – cafes and restaurants outer frontage
- Make sure that some of the spaces are large enough for businesses to be viable long term
- Community uses means publicly accessible – not meeting rooms or a community centre

Outdoor Performance/Market

- Medina style passages
- Arcades i.e. Cardiff, Brighton
- Community and performance areas inside development
- Open Space within site for performance, exhibitions etc
- Food Market – a Bristol version of Borough Market?
- Performance space and market – both in service or parking areas
- Food hub – community market like in Spain, managed locally
- A stylish market that uses the arches
- Spaces – make them big enough to be viable. Mix - vary sizes and location. Indoor market. Include lower ground floor – don't bother Ashley Road Ground floor.
- Open spaces oriented for sun?

Management regime/ownership

- Take account of scale within local economy – starter units, some low/affordable/subsidised rents and some higher for established businesses
- Full market rents will not be affordable for many businesses- need creative solutions
- Flexible terms for traders
- Whole property must be owned by Stokes Croft Community Land Trust
- Ownership – a locally based organisation to lead this. Uses – flexible, changeable spaces. Make them big enough. Not community cafes. Arts and culture oriented.
- Ground floor should be managed as one by a very engaged organisation (not standard commercial agent)
- Management arrangements need to be long term and committed to the community
- Think of what is coming – local vs global; work units affordable; looser zoning

2.2 Through routes and Car Parking

Through routes

- Link through to Picton Street
- Picton Street – link through to front of site

- Entrance opposite the top of Picton Street
- Extend Picton Street through site
- Provide/ensure through route from Stokes Croft to Picton Street
- New, attractive route from Ashley Road to Stokes Croft – activities on route
- Through route for pedestrians along the axis of Picton Street
- Main road and then pedestrian routes through
- Future proof a connecting route from Ashley Road to Hepburn Road

Service routes

- Priority for access to site should be top service businesses and commercial units
- Commercial delivery access routes into development
- Services on site not on street

Entrances, spaces and pedestrians

- Through route and “piazza” space
- Create a permeable space – a public square/piazza
- Open floor – market space within Carriageworks – visible to Stokes Croft
- Carriageworks good for through routes - market arcade
- Arcades - Brighton Lanes, Cardiff
- Entrance through building line on Stokes Croft needs to be high, wide and inviting
- No private routes through site – public routes and spaces and amenities

Car Parking - yes

- Underground car parking would solve the problem of anti-car people seeing the cars as they can pretend they don't exist
- Underground car parking for commercial tenants – at least 40 spaces
- Explore re-using existing basement a car park
- Adequate car parking needs to take account of use by people from further away – viability will require their input/participation
- Flexible parking reflect the Stokes Croft type of area – i.e. Stokes Croft is a night time economy so parking arrangements need to reflect this!
- Is it possible to use shared parking area through the day – until 8.30am residents then half hour slots until 6pm then it reverts to residents?
- Family houses and larger flats generate the need for parking – small units don't
- Save parking for residents
- Limit parking but allow businesses to breathe, with delivery and short stay spaces
- s/b a “car free” development where residents without parking spaces would not qualify for RPS

Car Parking - no

- Why not completely car free?
- Minimum car parking due to good transport links
- Young people don't have cars
- As little parking as possible – mainly for residents
- Not a destination- a local facility
- Need to think and live more local again – 50 years ago, Cheddar was a day away!
- Car parking – aaaah!

2.3 Upper Floors

Residential

- Engage with local estate agent
- All residential in back
- No more student accommodation
- Housing to be long term residents, sustainable so tenants are part of the community, not transient i.e. students
- Residential – mix but flats not for families. One or two bed for couples, students, young people
- Ideally suit residential.
- Make lettings work well – make sure it works to minimise conflict
- Social landlord to develop site so that accommodation is affordable to local people i.e. Ashley residents. This creates regeneration without gentrification – not gentrifying beyond local accessibility
- Management of housing so that it complements ground floor activities

Commercial

- Any commercial activities on the street only – residential to the back of the site
- Residential units should facilitate home businesses
- Work/live space
- Small offices – IT maybe, design houses, small scale studios
- Work/live – serviced offices on first floor
- Start up businesses (Verve)
- Desk/work spaces/cubicles
- Shell units

Design

- Not dark and dingy – light and bright with balconies
- All previous plans retain Westmoreland House creating dark cavernous corridors and dark gloomy flats – knock Westmoreland House down
- Remove Westmoreland House
- Housing – balconies in flats
- Living vegetation on roofs and fascias
- Radical rebuild for Carriageworks – Godwin would do this if alive today
- Design – don't be afraid of the tower. Some public roof top access for food and drink, public roof garden
- Connect first floor to the street
- Piano Noble – First Floor different?

2.4 Design

Sustainability and environment

- Environmental design – inspire for Green Capital
- Material use from local suppliers- materials from renewable sources
- Warm in winter – cool in summer
- High targets for environmental standards – e.g. CFHS 5 or 6
- For green measures, use robust technology and avoid “status” items that just don't work - that will make a stronger public example.
- Roofs and vertical spaces for planting and greenery – wildlife friendly, indigenous species, public gardens
- Ensure completed scheme contributes to local environment throughout its life

- Amenity space on roofs – buildings used to reflect and enhance conservation area
- Explore roof spaces for amenity and some biodiversity
- Ensure local artists and designers are involved
- Consider bringing in external funding – HLF, Arts Council etc - to add value and £££ to the pot to enable more

Design

- Jaw dropping design that inspires and attracts visitors for generations
- Generate unusually designed buildings and avoid “standard” development of mainstream developer
- Design – modern, exciting, dynamic, colourful innovative, outstanding
- High quality and innovative
- Something of lasting quality
- Design! – social economic commercial affordable structure
- Green living walls and “tree tenants” (ref. Hundertwasser)
- Hundertwasser House on Stokes Croft would be amazing
- Imagine what Godwin would do if alive today – beautiful, sustainable, a jewel, not slavish rebuild
- Mix lovely old Godwin architecture with contemporary quality and style
- Traditional i.e. Victorian/Georgian façade to link into Picton Street
- Quality materials, site not too dense, family housing, 2 storey at Hepburn Road edge
- Rescue Sweet Tooth’s skull – keep it and use inside building

Westmoreland House and Carriageworks

- Demolition of Westmoreland House would be a great waste of resources and energy. Demolish only if absolutely necessary, develop imaginatively
- Demolish the concrete monstrosity please – all previous plans have not demolished, leading to dark, cavernous corridors and dark and gloomy dwellings. My house is dark and gloomy in Hepburn Road and hard to live in.
- Demolish all Westmoreland House and replace with high quality building of same height as Carriageworks. Restore Carriageworks.
- Only retain tower of Westmoreland House if there is compelling reasons – financial or high quality design – for its retention and the scheme would otherwise fail
- Tower is iconic in its own right – give it a Stokes Croft flavour. Design overall should win awards! Don’t be slavish to heritage or finances (!!)
- Retain Carriageworks façade. Use roofs for amenity to flats.
- Link façade into Picton Street
- The whole of the Carriageworks building is likely to be of historic significance.

2.5 Delivery

Funding and management

- Seek partners for funding – Arts Council, Tate, English Heritage
- Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund etc funding to extend options
- Think big process
- Godwin always complained of lack of vision
- One delivery organisation? Try to lead the money not the other way round
- Divide site into smaller development parcels with creative and varied design proposals
- Sell the commercial/retail

- Development should be financially independent and not in need of outside funding to run it
- Long term sustainability
- Getting the product right
- Must be viable but understanding of “viability” needs negotiation through the delivery process. Viability over what period of time?
- Seek pre-lets and freehold/long leasehold partners at the business development stage of the project. Don't be put off by traditional “covenants” of pre-lets

Local benefit

- Bringing together local skills, stakeholders etc so that the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts
- Keep local people involved and ensure development reflects local aspirations for the site
- Local all the way – create proper jobs for local folk
- Involve local workforce in construction and design
- Self build opportunities
- Look for innovative new solutions e.g. self build, co-housing, worker co-operatives etc
- Refurb = employment
- Think global, act local
- Local is not just immediately adjacent to the site. There may be a very wide area of impact – St Pauls, Montpelier Cotham, Kingsdown
- Delivered by the community, facilitated by KHA
- Keep the community involved during delivery and in the future management
- Must be deliverable but where possible unusual and in keeping with the Stokes Croft “feel”.

3. Activity 2: Generating design options

Participants worked in 4 small groups to develop one or more options for the site, using materials provided (blank map, overlays, pens) and were reminded of the Knightstone design brief and the CAG Vision.

Feedback from group work

- Some groups produced just one option, others generated up to 2 options plus variations on a theme. In total there were 6 different options.
- 2 options kept Westmoreland House, remainder chose to demolish it
- All options pushed the family housing (typical max 3 storey) to the rear of the site so as to abut Hepburn Road and Brigstoke Road
- All options indicated higher development along the Stokes Croft / Ashley Rd frontages
- All options indicated a through route running from Ashley Road, approximately opposite Picton Street, with most exiting through the existing pedestrian door in the centre of the Carriageworks. Some also suggested wider opening up off the Carriageworks façade

- 2 options indicated open space facing onto Ashley Road, but all options showed open space to the rear of the Carriageworks
- 4 options had the potential to 'future proof' the development by ensuring access could be created at a later date on to Hepburn Road adjacent to Dale Croft and further 2 of the above options could integrate an access in to the rear of the Kuumba Arts Centre (N.B. the land giving access to Hepburn Road is not owned by Bristol City Council and Kuumba have a long lease on their building).
- 1 option suggested No. 4 Ashley Road could be carefully demolished and rebuilt on another site
- 1 option sought to exploit the change in site levels from the highest point on Stokes Croft to a low point backing on to Brigstocke Road / Hepburn Road
- 1 option sought to integrate both No 4 Ashley Road and Dale Croft into the development
- 1 options suggested extending Picton Street into the site by changing the road surface
- A variation on an option suggested the use of shipping containers for housing
- 1 option suggested workshops could be provided for craft and light industry
- 1 option suggested the use of live/work accommodation
- 1 option suggested a pull in loading bay opposite Picton Street
- One option suggested utilising the whole of the Carriageworks for community / commercial use

Quoted examples

- 2 options indicated remodelling the Stokes Croft, Ashley Road and Cheltenham Road junction suggesting Poynton, Cheshire as a good example, see <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/what-we-do/route-design-and-construction/shared-space-busy-intersection-poynton>
- One group promoted more radical ideas for the retention and redevelopment of Westmoreland House described in a number of options citing Hüntertwasser approach as inspiration for an arts led type development, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hundertwasserhaus>
- One option suggested a medina type more intensive development of small streets and squares / open space, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina_quarter
- All options included through routes that typically sought to combine vehicle access off Ashley Road with more general open public space. J3 in Easton was cited as a good example

Principles expressed

- The development should aspire to be off grid
- There should be a major component of commercial uses with active frontages maximised
- The through route should run from Ashley Road to Stokes Croft, exiting via the Carriageworks
- Housing should be to the rear of the site with higher development towards Stokes Croft and Ashley Road frontages
- There should be provision of higher value residential properties in the Carriageworks
- There should be opportunities created for construction skills training

Observations on the task from the groups

- Generally thought Activity 1 prepared participants well for Activity 2
- Found the pack information helpful
- The task highlighted the challenges of the site given the need for commercial viability
- The task showed the difficulty in reconciling differing opinions within a small group and reaching a consensus around a design solution
- More time could have been usefully employed in fine tuning the options

Cautionary Note from facilitators

- None of the options from the group demonstrated compliance with the accommodation needs of the Knightstone Housing Design Brief

4. Event Feedback

Positives:

Activities that generated lots of ideas

High levels of creativity and agreement

The two stage structure was a good one, working initial idea generation activity followed by group work on designing options.

Negatives:

There was insufficient time, particularly for the options exercise.

Halina Pasiecznik, Vivid Regeneration, 4th August 2013