

**PLANNING APPLICATION 20/00259/FUL  
REDEVELOPMENT OF HOMEBASE SITE**

**OBJECTION COMMENTS FROM RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY VOICE**

Riverside Community Voice (RCV) is the residents' association for the Bath Riverside development which is adjacent to the Homebase site. We therefore have a strong interest in the Guild Living proposal.

We support the intention to redevelop the Homebase site as a later life community and we welcome the intention to create a mixed use development which will provide opportunities for residents of this development and those from neighbouring areas to mix and mingle. However we have a number of serious concerns about the proposal in its present form.

**1. The proposed density.** The drawings make clear that the intention is to squeeze as many dwellings as possible into this relatively small site. Most of the buildings will be six storeys high, with very little open space between them, apart from the routes through the site. There does not seem to be much opportunity for residents and their visitors to relax out of doors. The circular layout of the buildings tends to draw the eye into the middle of the development, rather than providing views out to the surrounding green hills which characterise the city of Bath. The Bath Riverside development benefits from generous open spaces, particularly alongside the river, and from a variety of types and heights of dwelling which avoids the sense of monotony which is implied in the Guild Living drawings. In particular the two tallest buildings on the Riverside estate (Royal View and Sovereign Point) are interesting and distinctive in their own right and are set against extensive open spaces which protect their status as 'landmark' buildings and ensure that their height does not feel oppressive. These buildings should not be used as a precedent to justify solid six storey apartment blocks with very little surrounding space such as buildings B and C.

**2. Colour.** The proposed cladding appears to be relatively dark in colour, and this will aggravate the sense of enclosure. We recognise that the supply of Bath stone is limited and that other suitable materials may need to be used. We would encourage the use of materials which are closer to the Bath stone palette and would relate better to the Bath Riverside buildings.

**3. Impact on immediate neighbours.** Building A is very close to the Albert Crescent triangle (Albert Crescent, Western Terrace and the Mews) which forms part of Bath Riverside. We acknowledge that changes have been made in response to concerns expressed during the recent public consultation, but serious concerns remain, including doubts about the accuracy of the daylight and sunlight analysis. We urge the developers to look again at the juxtaposition of Building A and the Albert Crescent triangle and make every effort to find a more neighbourly solution.

**4, Traffic management.** We have a number of concerns, including some which stem from the response from the Highways Department posted on 18 February

- Access to the site is from the complicated and frequently congested Pines Way gyratory. Since all traffic entering and leaving the Guild Living development will

come through a single point (unlike the current situation where much of the Homebase traffic enters and leaves via the Sainsbury access road) there must be a serious risk of congestion

- Traffic management and visitor parking within the Bath Riverside development will not be in their final form until Stothert Avenue has been adopted by B&NES, which we are told may not be for another 12 months. It seems likely that the reopening of Midland Road and the Destructor Bridge will lead to an increase in traffic along Stothert Avenue, which will further aggravate congestion and air quality issues. The Highways Department response does not mention this significant change to the traffic arrangements.
- We note that car parking for residents will be in an innovative automated stack arrangement. We are not familiar with such systems and would be interested to know how delays and queuing are avoided and what impact this system would have on the cost of the residents' service charges.
- We do not want to see the very limited outdoor spaces within the site occupied by parked cars. However we are concerned that there should be adequate visitor parking, and that effective enforcement arrangements are put in place. We note that the Highways Department states that 'Parking throughout the local area is also well controlled and overspill parking is unlikely to occur'. We disagree. At present a significant number of cars are parked at the western end of the Homebase car park on a semi-permanent basis. These cars will have to go somewhere when the car park is closed. It seems highly likely that the Riverside visitors' parking spaces in Stothert Avenue, Victoria Bridge Road and Victoria Bridge Square will come under significant pressure.

**5. Pedestrian routes.** As the planning application recognises, there is heavy pedestrian footfall across the site. The existing pedestrian routes must be kept open and properly maintained or enhanced. While we understand that Guild Living does not own the river path, we hope that they might take responsibility for maintaining the stretch from the Albert triangle to Sainsbury's bridge.

**6. Gulls and Pigeons.** We are disappointed that there is as yet no Gull and Pigeon strategy. The control of gulls and pigeons needs to be an integral part of the design of the buildings, not an afterthought.

**7. Classification of the dwellings.** We query the assertion that the dwellings are Class C2 – residential institutions. In our view Guild Living are seeking to create a residential community, not an institution.

**8. Cumulative impact of developments.** We would urge B&NES Planning Policy to ensure that all the proposed developments along the river are looked at holistically rather than in isolation. We are particularly concerned about the capacity of the A36, but other traffic issues and other public services are also significant. It seems to us that the existing infrastructure is being asked to accept new loads which are well in excess of what it is designed for. It is essential that B&NES secures adequate contributions from developers to enable the infrastructure to cope.

**9. Construction management.** This will be a major construction site which will inevitably cause considerable disruption for neighbouring residents. We will expect the developers to take all reasonable steps to minimise disturbance. In particular, the pedestrian and cyclist routes across the site must be kept open during construction; the site manager will need to be available 24/7 to deal with any problems; the developers will need to work with Pinnacle Property Management to enforce parking restrictions on Victoria Bridge Road and Stothert Avenue; and suitable measures will need to be in place to minimise noise and dust.