

An urban redevelopment of a brownfield site for residential apartments. The canal in this part of the city is set at street level with road bridges rising up and over this sustainable transport corridor. The site has a 60m long canal side frontage, but the development as proposed in the initial application largely turned its back on the towpath and canal environment at ground floor level. This blank elevation, exacerbated by its location adjacent to a road bridge, created a long, isolated corridor for towpath users.

The Trust, along with other interested local groups, has been working to improve the canal environment in this part of the city, and to encourage activity and passive surveillance on the

canal. An adopted local SPD recommends outward facing frontages to increase public safety through active frontages and natural surveillance. The Trust had worked with the architects of a previously approved scheme to amend it so that it included much more activity and surveillance of the canal side.

It was therefore unfortunate that the new applicant returned to the previously proposed layout, that failed to enhance the character and appearance of the canal environment. The Trust objected to the proposal that provided a blank wall at the back of the towpath, adjacent to the bridge, creating a very enclosed environment. The LPA refused the application, partly for the impact on the canal and

the Planning Inspectorate agreed with our concerns at the subsequent appeal, which was dismissed. The proposed building was then amended in a subsequent application, reducing the length of wall against the towpath and increasing natural surveillance.

The revised proposal has now been built and is shown in the photograph. The landscaping provided along the canal side, as required by a condition of the approval, does not appear to have been carried out as proposed and so the Trust has raised the matter with the LPA.

Early pre-application discussions with the Trust will help to inform the Design & Access Statement with the opportunities/constraints the waterway presents to the site.

Local planning policy worded to encourage public access to and recreational use of waterways is key to bringing forwards the aims of NPPF paragraphs 58 and 69.

Proposed canal side buildings and end uses should be sited and designed to create natural surveillance and policing of the waterway and towpath.

