

Planning Group Report June 2001 - Roger Mortimer

The planning application for the main UWE site on **Redland Hill** has been modified, with the number of dwellings reduced from 94 to 79. The long block facing Redland Hill has been reduced from 6 to 5 storeys and shortened. The nine storey tower has been re-sited away from Durdham Park. There is no doubt that the objections of residents and RCAS Planning Group have helped to achieve these major improvements. Many other comments have also been attended to, and a little more existing street parking has been retained.

The revised scheme was recommended for approval by the planning officer and permission was granted on May 30th.

The tower and the modern design approach are still disliked by many, including the Conservation Advisory Panel. We have not opposed a modern treatment in principle but are worried about the monolithic feel of a very large development, which lacks the attractive diversity that characterises Redland. Very considerable loving care and skill will be needed in the selection of materials and detailing to prevent a mega-block effect. Such matters remain to be approved. There is no indication that the point is understood and the bland detailing by the same architects of The Point flats development on Wapping Wharf is not encouraging. We must now wait and see.

On the whole we feel that community effort has made a real improvement to an initially quite unacceptable scheme.

At the time of writing, no revised drawings of the **Malvern House** site development have been seen so we do not know if our comments about over-development and the over-large new buildings to Grove Road have been addressed.

Success on one much smaller issue can be reported. The attractive appearance of the original full height shop windows in Whiteladies Road can be seen at the *Sofa Workshop*. An application to replace a similar original shopfront at 80 Whiteladies Road was objected to by Anthony Wilks. The planners agreed. The new tenants of 80 /82, Delcon, have now nicely restored the period shopfronts. It is also a relief to see a real shop rather than another sandwich bar!