# Proposed rooftop terrace at V-Shed sparks heritage concerns and local debate in Bristol



A proposed rooftop terrace overlooking Bristol's Floating Harbour is facing opposition from heritage officials due to concerns it would partially block a critical view of Bristol Cathedral, sparking incredulity among local residents.

The building at the centre of the debate is the V-Shed, a historic dockside structure housing four popular bars and restaurants. The owner, Padmanor Investments, plans to add a rooftop terrace featuring pergola shelters to provide patrons with enhanced views of the waterfront and the iconic cathedral. However, both Historic England and Bristol City Council’s heritage department have raised objections, arguing that the terrace would obstruct a key sightline of the cathedral tower as seen from Narrow Quay near the Arnolfini, on the opposite side of St Augustine’s Reach.

Steve Davis, head of Padmanor Investments, has publicly promoted the rooftop bar scheme as a way to enliven the existing venue. Despite this, planning officers have recommended refusal of the proposal due to its impact on the ‘heritage view’ from ground level. The application is due to be discussed by councillors on 30 April.

The controversy centres on balancing the preservation of traditional sightlines with the potential benefits of creating new public spaces offering panoramic vistas. Supporters argue the terrace would allow visitors unique elevated views of the cathedral and invigorate an area long renowned for its hospitality.

Local residents have expressed frustration and disbelief at the council’s decision. Many point out an apparent inconsistency in planning policy, noting that permission has been granted over recent years for numerous high-rise developments that have significantly altered Bristol’s skyline and obscured views of landmarks such as the cathedral, Cabot Tower, and the Wills Memorial Building.

Melissa Topping from Redfield commented, “It's OK to have all the ugly student blocks going up blocking our view of four beautiful church spires and gorgeous rooftops, that we used to have, from the top of the hill in east Bristol?” Her remark highlights a perception of double standards regarding developments that affect heritage views.

Others voiced support for the rooftop terrace as a vital social space. Aman Khan said, “With everything that’s been done to this area over the past 40 years, there’s nothing wrong with this idea. Anyone who wants a look at the Cathedral can stroll over and have plain sight of it. The bars would be well-patronised and ensure the economic future of a well-loved area of the city.”

Yvonne Lambert added, “We need more spaces that are elevated for drinking. Not even full swing of summer, and it’s been crazy trying to find a place to drink that isn’t fully booked. People deserve better. Not all this bus gate nonsense and clean air rubbish. We need more drinking places with views.”

Some commentators noted that similar developments have previously altered views in the area. Paul Mizen observed, “When they allowed a cafe to be built on the waterfront at Canons Marsh, which completely obstructed the views of the Cathedral, a precedent was set. I’m not always in favour of developments that obscure views, as with much of the centre of the city, but this seems minor compared to many.”

On social media, sentiment was summed up by a user named Tom, who wrote, “We can’t have anything nice in this city,” encapsulating the frustration felt by many locals.

The planning application’s fate will be determined at the forthcoming council meeting, with heritage protection concerns weighing against potential benefits to the vibrancy and appeal of Bristol’s harbourfront leisure scene.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bristol247.com/food-and-drink/news-food-and-drink/huge-roof-terraces-planned-top-former-dockside-warehouse/> - This article supports the claim that a proposed rooftop terrace on a former dockside warehouse, V Shed, is facing opposition due to concerns about obstructing views of Bristol Cathedral. The project aims to create a unique setting celebrating the waterfront location.
* <https://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/v-shed-harbourside/> - Bristol Civic Society's stance on the V Shed proposal highlights concerns about the impact on views of the Cathedral from St Augustine's Reach, which corroborates the article's mention of heritage objections.
* <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/agents-society-assets-files/45c7aaf85c2c340a62db9bd12072f053-225282%20HARBOURSIDE%20LEISURE%20INVESTMENT%20V11%20FINAL.pdf> - This document provides information about V Shed's current state and its role in Bristol's harbourside leisure scene, backing the article's description of the building as a significant part of the local hospitality sector.
* <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s84518/2.%2022.00933.F%20-%20U%20Shed.pdf> - This document discusses a different but related development in the area, highlighting the broader context of urban development and heritage concerns in Bristol's harbourside.
* <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66b2261ba3c2a28abb50dda2/Planning_Statement_Redacted.pdf> - The planning statement for another Bristol development discusses the context of rooftop terraces and heritage considerations, providing a broader framework for understanding the challenges faced by the V Shed proposal.