

THIS IS THE WRONG DEVELOPMENT, THE WRONG SITE, AND THE WRONG DEVELOPER.

This is a site of huge cultural, historical and environmental importance with many listed buildings. It is the subject of intense local and national scrutiny. Acorn has never taken on a development of this size, complexity and sensitivity. Failure would be disastrous for the Gardens, for Bristol and for BZS Trustees – who would forever be blamed for a part-built eyesore.

Charity trustees are held to the highest standards of care: what due diligence have you as a Board undertaken and personally seen? Savills has advised you but also works for Acorn – not an independent view.

Bristol does not want this development. The opposition to the destruction of the site, cutting down its trees and laying waste to its beautiful Gardens is not going away. Acorn should never have been selected by BZS.

WE CALL ON THE TRUSTEES OF BZS TO END DISCUSSIONS WITH ACORN IMMEDIATELY.

BRISTOL DESERVES BETTER.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT: COME TO THE DEMO!

Wednesday 11th March, 12.30pm
Acorn's Offices, 50 Clifton Down Road, BS8 4AH

savebristolgardensalliance@gmail.com



LAST CHANCE TO SAVE ONE OF BRISTOL'S **FINEST HERITAGE SITES** FROM THE BULLDOZER

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRISTOL ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY



SAVE BRISTOL
GARDENS ALLIANCE

CHIS Clifton & Hotwells
Improvement Society

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TRUSTEES OF BRISTOL ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The people of Bristol have nurtured and supported the Bristol Zoo Gardens for almost 200 years. We remain implacably opposed to the destruction of our heritage.

Green Councillors opposed the application but the majority who granted planning permission did so because they were told it would deliver 'affordable' housing and a free public space in perpetuity.

All are likely to be sorely disappointed. And a disaster for Bristol is in the making – because you are apparently determined to sell the Gardens to a wholly unsuitable developer, **Acorn Property Group**.

The people of Frome saw the risks of Acorn developing Saxonvale and saw them off.

The people of Bristol will do the same for the Zoo Gardens.

FINANCIAL CONDUCT AUTHORITY WARNING.

In December 2025 the Financial Conduct Authority published a warning against Acorn Group holding company RST Group Holdings Ltd (trading as Acorn Property Invest / Acorn / Acorn Property Group) stating **'You should avoid dealing with this firm and beware of scams.'** FCA goes on to warn: **'it's unlikely you'd get your money back if the firm goes out of business.'**

BZS and Acorn have claimed that the FCA warning is about a separate company and nothing to do with the proposed sale of the Zoo. However the 5 (yes five) Acorn companies set up to run the Zoo development share the same directors and same registered office as the company the FCA is warning us about. Hardly separate.

LIQUIDATIONS, DISPUTES, MILLIONS OF POUNDS OF DEBTS.

Since September last year, 3 Acorn development companies in the South West have been dissolved and an additional 9 are currently in liquidation. Their creditors include HMRC (owed over £8m), three local councils including Bristol, plus contractors, plasterers, builders and other suppliers.

Although there is no evidence of unlawful or illegal activities by Acorn Directors, Acorn companies are additionally involved in multi-million pound disputes with stakeholders in Bruton and Glamorgan reportedly involving claims of c£13m:

Somerset Live 3 May 2025: *"[Acorn] has strenuously denied using accounting tricks to avoid paying creditors associated with a housing development in Bruton."*

Daily Mail 25 March 2024: Bonvilston Vale
"Our new-build dream home has turned into a nightmare - we've been abandoned": Couple say their £715k five-bed is full of snags and they are living on an estate with unfinished roads and no street lighting after developer went bust."

Cornwall Live 12 December 2024: *"[Acorn] firm goes bust owing £1.2 million to Cornish taxpayers: the developer managed to finish its*

'luxurious' homes but collapsed before paying up towards affordable housing in Cornwall - and is trying to blame Cornwall Council."

AUDITORS: 'MATERIAL UNCERTAINTY' ACORN COMPANIES CAN CONTINUE AS GOING CONCERNS.

Group accounts have been approved, however Acorn's auditors still state 'material concerns' over whether the core Group companies and multiple subsidiaries can continue as going concerns. This is because they all rely in turn on 12-month loans from other group companies to keep going. The Zoo Gardens development will take years – and the 'free public park' needs money to be kept open. Where is Acorn's guarantee that the funding plug won't be pulled on its Clifton development companies?

Joint Administrators Report February 2024: Cotswold Village (Ashton Keynes) Limited
"The Director [John Skok] attributes the failure of the Company to the failure of the loan repayment between the Company and the parent company which led to the downfall of the Company."

'AFFORDABLE' HOUSING AND 'FREE PUBLIC ACCESS IN PERPETUITY' – AND WHY BRISTOL WON'T GET EITHER.

Your CEO, Dr Morris, persists in claiming that the 'affordable' housing and free public access are 'guaranteed' by the s106 Agreement that sits alongside planning permission.

This is just plain wrong under planning law. Any developer can apply to get rid of the expensive inconvenience of a s106 after 5 years. They frequently do - and Councils frequently agree, rather than risking a part-built eyesore.

Like all developers, Acorn is under financial pressure from rising construction costs. It is perfectly likely it will try and get out of providing 'affordable' housing and free public access – the very reasons this horrible scheme was given permission in the first place. And having sold the Gardens, BZS Trustees won't be able to do anything - just rue your decision to sell to Acorn in the first place.