

SAVE

RULE 6 STATEMENT OF CASE ON BEHALF OF SAVE BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

Applications by Centros Lancaster LP for planning permission for comprehensive redevelopment at Canal Corridor North Site, Edward Street, Lancaster

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFS: APP/A2335/V/09/2095002;
APP/A2335/V/09/2098511; APP/A2335/V/09/2099389; APP/A2335/V/09/2098517;
APP/A2335/V/09/2098518; APP/A2335/V/09/2098519; APP/A2335/V/09/2098520;
APP/A2335/V/09/2098521; APP/A2335/V/09/2098522; APP/A2335/V/09/2098523;
APP/A2335/V/09/2098524; APP/A2335/V/09/2098525

Planning Application: 08/00866/OUT
Listed Building Consent Applications: 07/00662/LB; 07/00665/LB; 07/00667/LB;
07/00668/LB; 07/00669/LB; 07/00674/LB
Conservation Area Consent Applications: 07/00663/CON; 07/00666/CON;
07/00670/CON; 07/00671/CON; 07/00673/CON

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ROLE AND STATUS OF SAVE BRITAIN'S HERITAGE, A RULE 6 PARTY

SAVE Britain's Heritage (SAVE) is an independent charity, registered no 269129, that for over 30 years has campaigned for threatened historic buildings, areas and designed landscapes across the United Kingdom. SAVE's campaigns have resulted in the rescue, repair and reuse of numerous historic buildings, both listed buildings and those in conservation areas. In addition, SAVE has published over 150 reports and mounted several campaigning exhibitions. The organisation has around 1600 paying Friends and for the last 18 years has published a *Buildings at Risk* catalogue listing buildings in need of rescue and repair. SAVE has always maintained a strong interest in historic town centres and the damage caused by inappropriate development. Published reports have included *Hull, Gateway to the North or End of the Line?* (1981); *Cutting the Heart out of Derby* (1982); *The Agony of Georgian Liverpool* (1984).

SAVE's most recent high profile campaign involving a conservation area concerned Smithfield General Market in London. In 2008 SAVE joined English Heritage in opposing the City Corporation and its developer Thornfield PLC at a Public Inquiry over redevelopment plans. SAVE argued that the General Market building made a positive and significant contribution to the Smithfield Conservation Area and that the proposed replacement building would have a strong negative impact on the setting of listed buildings in the vicinity. The Inspector and Secretary of State concurred and the application was refused.

SAVE is not a statutory body, and is entirely dependent on donations from the public for its operation.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC INQUIRY

Outline of SAVE case

SAVE's case is that the proposed development of the Canal Corridor is inappropriate, that it will dramatically harm the two conservation areas covered by the site and will have a negative effect on the listed buildings within the area. SAVE holds that a majority of the existing unlisted buildings on the site which fall within the Lancaster City Conservation Area and the Moor Lane Mills Conservation Area make a positive and significant contribution to the character and appearance of these conservation areas. They are of importance architecturally, historically and as a group, within the meaning of PPG15. Furthermore, they should be considered within the context of the surviving medieval street pattern. SAVE maintains that a majority of these buildings can be repaired and reused without the need for demolition, that there is adequate space within the site for sensitive new development to make a conservation-led scheme, which preserves the existing buildings and street pattern, achievable and financially viable.

SAVE argues that the positive contribution made by the unlisted buildings in the conservation area outweighs any claimed benefits - architectural or otherwise - of the proposed replacement development and that the PPG15 tests for demolition (the same broad criteria as those for listed buildings) have not been properly met. The proposals will also have a damaging impact on the settings of numerous listed buildings and

result in the partial demolition of three Grade II listed buildings on St Leonard's Gate and the rebuilding of parts of several other Grade II listed structures. On a wider level, the proposals will cause significant damage to views to and from conservation areas.

The architectural and historic qualities of the Canal Corridor area

Information will be provided on the history and development of the Canal Corridor site and on the special interest of the architecture and street pattern. The site will be looked at in the wider context of Lancaster's historic town centre. Lancaster is one of England's finest and best preserved county towns and the site of the proposed development should be understood as coterminous with the historic town centre. Despite part clearance of the Canal Corridor site in 1960s for an abortive road scheme, the area retains a sense of organic evolution, and benefits from a finely grained irregular street pattern, and a subtle, varied streetscape. The building material, in common with the rest of Lancaster, is a light sandstone.

The site comprises several overlapping elements: the area around the Stonewell 'nose', a triangle formed from the ancient thoroughfares of St Leonard Gate and Moor Lane, comprises a dense cluster of 18th and 19th century buildings, some of which incorporate parts of earlier structures. This area is characterised by an intimate network of lanes and courtyards. The centre of the site, part of which falls between the two conservation areas, is occupied by the 19th-century Mitchell's Brewery and associated buildings (including 18th-century maltings), an impressive complex and a rare survival. To the east of the site, closest to the canal, are more industrial buildings, including the Heron Chemical Works, another group which makes an important contribution to the special character of the site.

Overall, the site of the proposed development is a key historic area of Lancaster city centre. It reflects the growth of the city from the 16th-century onwards - both in the smaller domestic and commercial buildings around Stonewell and in the industrial buildings to the east of the site which grew up following the construction of the canal in the late 18th century.

The character and appearance of the conservation areas and the role of the listed and unlisted buildings in the townscape

SAVE will analyse the character of the Canal Corridor site, illustrating how the existing buildings contribute positively to this character and how they have the potential to further enhance the area if given new uses. The importance of the buildings within the townscape, both in terms of the conservation area and Lancaster town centre will be explored including appropriateness of scale and use of materials.

SAVE will say that the loss of all the unlisted buildings under the current comprehensive redevelopment proposal will drastically alter the townscape both inside and outside the proposed site, and erase the special interest and character of the historic parts of the site, leaving the retained listed buildings isolated and deprived of context.

An alternative vision for the site

SAVE will offer up a blueprint for a conservation-led regeneration of the west and south of the site. This draft scheme will show how the Canal Corridor has the potential to become a creative hub for the town with a rich variety of uses.

Already, there are two theatres and a music and dance centre to act as a nucleus for the arts. The other buildings on the site could be converted to create a vibrant area of specialist shops, cafes, restaurants, office and workshops, with a new residential or retail area to the east. The historic street pattern would be retained, allowing incremental development as funds allow. New pedestrian routes from the centre of town would follow the existing network of roads and alley ways into the centre of the site, which would be opened up to create new tree-lined squares in front of the Brewery buildings and the Dukes Playhouse. The pedestrian route would then pass the converted Brewery buildings and workshops up steps to the canal path. The east part of the site would be re-established as a residential area with new houses and flats, with a new park beside the canal to the north.

SAVE will demonstrate how, with provision for further retail uses to the north east of the site, this type of development could be financially viable.

The quality of the proposed development

SAVE will show that the proposed development will not, as argued by the applicants, balance the loss of the buildings within the conservation area through its architectural merit, rather that the proposed large blocks are an entirely inappropriate form of development for this site with its two conservation areas. The proposed scheme would have a strong negative effect on the listed buildings in the vicinity and will have a detrimental impact both on the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

The new blocks and central 'square' or 'piazza' proposed in the scheme reflect nothing of the existing streetscape and plan. They impose a rigid, impermeable, series of blocks and disregard the scale and variation of the historic layout. The proposed layout is based on that of a modern shopping mall - a completely alien model for this part of the city. With substantial open space available in the north and east of the site for new build it is unacceptable and unjustifiable under planning guidance as well as regional and local planning policy.

SAVE will say how the proposed pedestrian bridge across Stonewell would have a adverse impact on the conservation area, by disrupting the street plan and degrading views to and from the development site.

Conclusion

SAVE holds that a majority of the unlisted buildings both inside and outside the two conservation areas are eminently worth retaining on architectural and historical grounds and that they make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Furthermore, they are capable of economic reuse, as per PPG15. SAVE says that the tests outlined in PPG15 for the demolition of buildings that contribute positively to a conservation area are not met by this application. For these reasons it will be

submitted that the planning application should be rejected.

Document List

SAVE is likely to refer to the following documents to support its case. This is not intended to be a complete list of documents that SAVE will rely on at the Public Inquiry.

National policy guidance including PPS1, PPS6, PPG15 and PPG16

North West Regional Spatial Strategy

Local Development Framework

Lancaster District Local Plan

Relevant Correspondence

Sketch proposal for alternative scheme and design statement by Richard Griffiths Architects

Princes Road Development, Wells: A Critical Review prepared by The Architects Group (February 2008)

SAVE reserves the right to add to the list of documents or its evidence at or before the Inquiry in the light of any additional information or matters raised by other parties at or in connection with the Inquiry.

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