



Historic England

SOUTH EAST OFFICE

Mr Stephen Harrison

Direct Dial: 01483 252015

Southampton City Council

Lower Ground Floor

Our ref: P00523434

Civic Centre

SOUTHAMPTON

SO14 7LS

30 November 2016

Dear Mr Harrison

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015  
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**

**BARGATE SHOPPING CENTRE, AND ADJOINING LAND IN QUEENSWAY, EAST STREET, HANOVER BUILDINGS, AND HIGH STREET, SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 1HF**

**Application No 16/01303/FUL**

Thank you for your letter of 12 August 2016 notifying Historic England of the above application. We provide the following advice regarding the amendments provided by the applicant, as detailed in document 'Scheme amendments report' (GL Hearn, October 2016).

**Historic England Advice**

In our previous response to this application, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016, we provided advice to your local authority, and raised concerns regarding a number of elements of the proposed development scheme. We provide further comment on the key elements below.

***Scale, height, and massing***

The overall height and mass of the development is still of concern, with regard to how



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it will impact upon designated heritage assets in the immediate surrounding area.

The amended TVIA is, however, much improved and provides some helpful images which confirm our initial assessment that the proposal would cause a low level of harm to the character and appearance of the Old Town conservation areas by increasing the intrusion of modern development in views across the Old Town. We do not wish to amend our previous comments in this regard.

The TVIA provides a clearer view as to how the development will impact upon the dual designated assets of the Bargate and the Town Wall north east section. The TVIA shows that the development will clearly be visible in a number of views, most strikingly from the north of the walls looking south and along the length of the walls. As emphasised in our previous response, this is harmful to the adjacent heritage assets as it disrupts the aesthetic appreciation and historical understanding of the Town Walls and Bargate, which were designed to be impressive and dominant structures within their wider surroundings.

The TVIA shows that harm resulting from a tall building when in the immediate vicinity of the scheduled north east section of wall is, however, significantly lower than when approaching the area from the north or west, due to the stepping back from the retail level of the residential blocks B, C and D.

We note also, that the visible elements of accommodation blocks B, C and D, whilst taller, actually appear to be comparable to the height existing Bargate Shopping Centre buildings in views north of the walls, due to the additional set-back of the development from the wall. In this regard, the new development is harmful to the appreciation of the Town Wall, but can be said to create no additional level of harm than the existing building.

We acknowledge that the opening of links between the different buildings will also create a less blocky appearance than the current Bargate buildings, creating views north and south through the development.

### ***Linking the Town Wall and Bargate***

We think that the interpretation of the wall line between the Bargate and disconnected north-east part of the Town Wall is an essential part of the proposed scheme. The document titled 'Reflecting the Line of the Old Town Wall' provides general images of lighting and sculptural effects, but does not provide a definite scheme which can be approved. We think the use of glass and lighting is a creative idea for re-linking the designated heritage assets, in addition to surface treatment, benches, street furniture and other art. We strongly recommend that your council secures a high quality scheme at an early stage, or by a condition placed on any consent, and that Historic England are given the opportunity to comment on proposals for a final scheme as this is a vital part of the interpretation of the Town Walls and Bargate.



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***Polymond Tower environs including proposed kiosks D and E***

In our previous response we raised concerns regarding the introduction of double-storey kiosks to the east of Polymond Tower, along with points for consideration regarding landscaping in its immediate environs.

The amended design drawings indicate the applicant has lowered the height of the kiosk closest to Polymond Tower to a single storey with roof terrace. We are supportive of this change, but think that the kiosks would better reflect the dominance of Polymond Tower if they were both single storey structures.

It is still our view that Polymond Tower would be best presented within a more open garden area around the tower (rather than an enclosed courtyard), with boundaries set further north towards the existing buildings that would create a sense of space around the tower where it could be appreciated 'in the round'. We do however note that our comments regarding the boundary treatment for this area have been translated into the new design drawings, and would suggest that the option for laser cut metal screening would create a more sensitive response to the Tower than a timber screening.

We also note that a bin store area for the kiosks has been included adjacent to the electric substation, and suggest that this be placed in a more discrete location further from the Tower.

**Policy**

We draw your particular attention to the following aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework:

Under the NPPF it is a core planning principle to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations (para.17 NPPF).

Your authority should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably (para.139 NPPF).

If a proposal cannot be amended to avoid all harm, then if the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para.132, NPPF).

**Recommendation**

The above comments respond to the additional amended information submitted by the applicant. We do not wish to amend our previous comments on other aspects of the





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SOUTH EAST OFFICE

scheme that are not included within the amendments.

We conclude that the development is harmful to designated heritage assets, but acknowledge that it also provides an opportunity to deliver heritage benefits, particularly in relation to the grade I listed buildings/scheduled monuments of the Town Wall north east and the Bargate.

As indicated in our previous response, the harm identified relates specifically to the height of the proposed development, and this harm must be clearly and convincingly justified to satisfy the expectations of the National Planning Policy Framework, and both the heritage and other public benefits from the development shown to clearly outweigh the harm.

We would welcome the opportunity of advising further. Please consult us again if any additional information or amendments are submitted. If, notwithstanding our advice, you propose to approve the scheme in its present form, please advise us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

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