

From:
Sent: 00:00:00
To:
Subject: FW: Historic England advice on Application no(s) 15/1240/03
Signed By:

Attachments: 15124003_HERef_P00488281_L245910.doc

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeffrey, Paul
Sent: 02 December 2015 09:19
To: Dash, Robert
Subject: FW: Historic England advice on Application no(s) 15/1240/03

Rob,

Please can you log this attached letter as an objection in consultation for Historic England 15/1240/03.

Thanks Paul

-----Original Message-----

From: simon.hickman@HistoricEngland.org.uk [mailto:simon.hickman@HistoricEngland.org.uk]
Sent: 01 December 2015 17:22
To: Jeffrey, Paul
Cc: simon.hickman@historicengland.org.uk; Pye, Andy
Subject: Historic England advice on Application no(s) 15/1240/03

Dear Mr Jeffrey,

Please find attached our advice on the following site -

Renslade House, Bonhay Road, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3BY Application No(s):15/1240/03

Yours sincerely,

Simon Hickman
Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: simon.hickman@HistoricEngland.org.uk
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Mr Paul Jeffrey
Exeter City Council - City Development
Civic Centre
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Exeter
Devon
EX1 1NN

Direct Dial: 0117 975 0717

Our ref: P00488281

1 December 2015

Dear Mr Jeffrey

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

RENSLADE HOUSE, BONHAY ROAD, EXETER, DEVON, EX4 3BY
Application No 15/1240/03

Thank you for your letter of 26 November 2015 notifying Historic England of the above application.

Summary

Renslade House is a 1970s office complex of limited architectural or historic merit. It occupies a prominent position adjacent to a busy traffic gyratory, but backs onto a slightly fragmented area of historic townscape, which includes a Grade II* listed building that directly addresses the rear of the site. We therefore welcome proposals to develop of the site, which we believe provides a great opportunity to mediate between Exeter's intrusive postwar highway engineering and its historic core.

However, the proposed development would adversely affect the setting of the City Walls and City Centre Conservation Area. We therefore suggest revisions to the proposals and at this stage, wish to register our objection to the application.

Historic England Advice

Historic England has been involved in preapplication discussions at this site. An earlier scheme rose higher than the current proposals and would have intruded in views of the Cathedral from Dunsford Road. At the height now proposed, the development would not affect the setting of the Cathedral.

However, our concerns remain in regards to impacts on view from the City walls. The City walls are scheduled Ancient Monuments, and within the City Centre Conservation Area. The walls and include Roman, Anglo Saxon and medieval walls which define the original extent of the city of Exeter. At Bartholomew Terrace, the original South-east corner of the city walls, historic fabric survives and the surrounding natural topography



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enables the viewer to understand their original defensive context. Standing on Bartholomew Terrace, views towards the rural hinterland of the City and distant Dartmoor contribute to the setting of the walls and thus their significance. The proposed new buildings flanking Renslade House would intrude into these views, diminishing the relationship between the scheduled walls and the wider landscape.

These views are very significant in allowing an understanding of the wall's historic purpose; marking the edge of the city and providing distant views from which travellers or hostile forces could be seen long before arrival. With long views available the purpose of the wall is easily understood by the casual observer; without them the course of the wall is just a line in the townscape.

We also believe the design of the proposed development could be improved in the context of its relationship with Tudor Street and the Old Tudor House. While some improvements have been made here during preapplication discussions, the proposed development would not create an active frontage to Tudor Street. I mentioned earlier this site's role as a mediator between the historic city centre and postwar gyratory, and Tudor Street is where the development needs to respond to the grain of the conservation area.

The Old Tudor House, listed at Grade II*, is an outstanding 16th century survival which is compromised by the poor quality public realm ahead of it. We therefore regret that the proposed development does not take the opportunity to begin the re-establishment of some sense of streetscape on the west side of Tudor Street.

Of particular relevance to this case is NPPF paragraph 132, which notes that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset and *the more important the asset the greater the weight should be*. The City walls are scheduled Monuments, which are defined by NPPF 130 as *designated assets of the highest significance*.

NPPF130 also notes that significance can be harmed by development in the setting of a heritage asset, and that any harm requires clear and convincing justification. In this context, we acknowledge that there is scope for significantly increasing the quantum of development on this site but do not consider that the current proposed arrangement of buildings is justified. Reducing the height of the proposed buildings flanking Renslade House but providing more development along Tudor Street might provide the same benefits but without harm to the historic environment.

The design policies of the NPPF are also relevant here. Paragraph 58 requires new developments to respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials. The proposals do not currently comply with this policy.

We also remind you of the need to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area under the terms of the 1990 planning act. Views



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from the city walls are part of the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area.

Recommendation

I regret that Historic England is obliged to object to these proposals, but consider that amendments - principally a reduction in height - to the scheme are necessary. We would be pleased to attend a meeting to discuss this further if you would find that useful.

Please contact me if we can be of further assistance. We would be grateful to receive a copy of the decision notice in due course. This will help us to monitor actions related to changes to historic places.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hickman

Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: simon.hickman@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc Andrew Pye, Exeter City Council



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