



Mr David Wordsworth
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Direct Dial: 01904 601982

Our ref: L01550686
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P01550676

11 November 2022

Dear Mr Wordsworth

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**QUEENSGATE MARKET HALL, EXISTING LIBRARY & ART GALLERY, PIAZZA
CENTRE, HUDDERSFIELD, HD1 2UJ
Application Nos 2022/93235 & 2022/93234 & 2022/93248**

Thank you for your letters of 7 October 2022 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Summary

Our town centres are great repositories of social, cultural, artistic and commercial heritage. They are living places and Historic England supports initiatives to arrest their decline and provide long-term sustainable uses that respond to changes in how we use and engage with them. To this end, we are investing elsewhere within Huddersfield town centre through our High Street Heritage Action Zone and we support the local authority's proactive approach to town centre regeneration as set out in the *Huddersfield Blueprint*.

The Kirklees Cultural Heart scheme offers the potential for substantial public benefits, including benefits to the listed buildings through increased investment and greater public access. We welcome the way in which the proposals have been developed with consideration for the significance of Huddersfield's heritage generally and the particular significance of the listed Queensgate Market and library buildings. The proposed uses offer the potential for enhanced public engagement with and greater access to the listed buildings, which we welcome.

Given the transformative nature of the proposals, there are some elements that would cause harm to the significance of the listed buildings. This harm has been well



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understood by the applicants and contained within the “less than substantial” bracket. Subject to the submission of minor amendments to address some outstanding concerns, we are content for your authority to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the scheme, as outlined in paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Historic England Advice

The Kirklees Cultural Heart is an ambitious project to revitalise this part of Huddersfield’s town centre and improve its sustainability by diversifying the activities on offer. We welcome the inclusion of the listed library and market within the scheme and the consideration that has been given to their significance. Historic England was engaged in detailed pre-application discussions, during which time considerable research and refinement of options has been undertaken by the project team.

This advice letter relates to all the proposals for the Cultural Heart, including proposals for the current library (Grade II), Queensgate Market (Grade II) and Piazza shopping centre. The site is excluded from, but adjacent to, the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings, including the Town Hall (Grade II) and Lawrence Batley Theatre (Grade II*).

The level of change proposed to the listed buildings and the wider area is extensive. There is the potential for considerable enhancement, both of the fabric and the experience of the listed buildings. There is also potential for harm. We have largely focussed our advice on the Queensgate Market, where the proposals are most intensive. We recommend you also consider the advice of your authority’s specialist Conservation Officers and the advice of the Twentieth Century Society in determining this application.

Queensgate Market (grade II)

Queensgate Market is a nationally important example of a twentieth-century market building and is recognised as being particularly special for the technological innovation of its construction and the incorporation of ambitious and novel sculptural panels by Fritz Stellar. The building was listed at Grade II in 2005 and an application to upgrade the listing to Grade II* was rejected in 2007.

The spatial experience of the main market hall, created by the concrete hyperbolic paraboloid columns and high-level lighting from the innovative patent glazing, is a joy and the building’s continued use as a market means this experience is available to the public. This continuity of use also means the building is relatively unaltered although it does exhibit the usual accumulation of additional services and safety measures such as guard rails to the roof, which have compromised the original simplicity of design.

We very much welcome the proposed investment in the Grade II listed market hall and its incorporation into the Cultural Heart masterplan. The proposed uses are



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exciting and present a great opportunity for better public interaction with one of Huddersfield's most distinctive and important buildings. The uses and internal layout also allow the retention of the market hall as a single, open space and increase access to areas of the building which are currently closed to the public (such as the original first floor restaurant). We welcome these positive aspects of the design.

Impact of the proposals on the significance of the listed building

The physical impact of the proposal for Queensgate Market is extensive. There would be a considerable loss of existing fabric, both structural and functional such as the market stalls and shop units. Taken individually, the interventions might be beneficial or cause minor harm to the significance of the listed building; however, cumulatively, the impact of the scheme would be at the higher end of "*less than substantial*" in the terminology of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This impact is acknowledged in the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the application. The assessment also identifies mitigation measures and areas where the scheme has been amended to reduce the harm to the listed building. At the end of our pre-application engagement there were a few areas where we felt there was the potential to reduce the harm further. These were retention of the southern staircore to the former restaurant, reduction in the number of new openings in the lower ground level of the eastern façade and refinement of the proposed glazed partitions within the former restaurant space. If these items are included in amended plans, which we understand are to be submitted shortly, we are content for the applications to be determined without further consultation with Historic England.

Library/ proposed museum (grade II)

We welcome the evolution of the scheme which has moved towards greater retention of original fabric and features. The building was purpose-built for its function as a library, so features such as the study carrels and bespoke furniture add to the significance of the listed building. We welcome the retention and repair of significant spaces including the former Committee Room, Chief Librarian's Office, Archive Office, first floor study carrels and main entrance lobby.

The simplified proposal for the extension sits well with the volume of the host building and will hopefully resolve what is currently an unsuccessful piece of townscape to the rear of the building.

The roof of the library has not performed well for many years, rendering the top floor unusable for the last two years. The primary structure is to be retained, with new roof lanterns and coverings. We have no objection to these proposals. As highlighted previously, we defer to the advice of the local authority's Conservation Officer on the remainder of the proposals for the building.

Demolition of the Piazza shopping centre, construction of new gallery and



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landscaping

The Piazza shopping centre was issued with a Certificate of Immunity from listing on 1 November 2022. It was assessed as not meeting the high test for listing, and although it has historic interest in relation to the twentieth-century development of this part of the town centre, we consider its contribution to the setting of the conservation area and surrounding listed buildings is minimal, even negative in places.

Replacing the existing Piazza buildings directly opposite the Lawrence Batley Theatre (Grade II*) with public realm will enhance the setting of the building and its appreciation by members of the public. Further south along Queen Street, the proposed gallery would still represent a sizeable building directly opposite the Grade II listed buildings on the east of Queen Street and it appears as though the building line will be stepped closer to these buildings. Definition of the street is welcome and frames views of the Church of St Paul to the south (Grade II), as is greater animation of the street through provision of active frontage on the lowest level of the gallery.

Historic England position on the applications

Our town centres are great repositories of social, cultural, artistic and commercial heritage. They are living places and Historic England supports initiatives to arrest their decline and provide long-term sustainable uses that respond to changes in how we use and engage with them. To this end, we are investing elsewhere within Huddersfield town centre through our High Street Heritage Action Zone and we support the local authority's proactive approach to town centre regeneration as set out in the *Huddersfield Blueprint*.

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Given the transformative nature of the proposals, there are some elements that would cause harm to the significance of the listed buildings. This harm has been well understood by the applicants and contained within the "less than substantial" bracket. Subject to the submission of minor amendments to address some outstanding concerns, we are therefore content for your authority to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the scheme, as outlined in paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the applications on heritage grounds. We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be



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addressed in order for the applications to meet the requirements of paragraphs 199, 200 and 202 of the NPPF.

In determining these applications you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess and section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the applications. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decisions in due course.

Yours sincerely
Emma Sharpe

Emma Sharpe

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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cc: James Sibson, FCBS



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