



45 Welbeck Street
London W1G 8DZ
020 3409 7755
info@hghconsulting.com
hghconsulting.com

Alex Kresovic
Senior Planning Officer
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
WC1H 9JE, London

21 April 2023

Dear Alex

Planning Application for a Ferris Wheel at Camden Lock Market (reference 2022/3853/P)

I am writing on behalf of a group of residents who reside at The Iceworks, 34-36 Jamestown Road, Camden NW1 7BY.

Specifically I write to object to the planning application by Labtech for a 40-metre-high Ferris Wheel.

Grounds of Objection

Having reviewed the information submitted, we wish to register strong objection to the proposals on three principal grounds:

1. Objection to the considerable increase in the intensity of activity and enhanced potential for associated crime and nuisance;
2. Adverse impact on the adjacent Listed buildings, and the Conservation Area;
3. Impact on the nearby residential amenities;

1. Objection to the considerable increase in the intensity of activity

Already a popular tourist destination, Camden Market receives 27 million annual visitors. The proposed Ferris wheel will significantly increase this number, placing enormous strain on local roads and public transportation. There are significant concerns that it will be challenging to manage the additional visitors in such a small, confined space, which would rapidly become overcrowded.

The Camden Local Plan clearly states in Policy E3 that it expects large scale new tourist development to be located in “the growth areas of Kings Cross, Euston, Tottenham Court Road and Holborn.

In terms of Camden Town, the policy states that “smaller scale” visitor accommodation will potentially be acceptable.

From a review of the applicants Planning Application, the operational management document states that the wheel will accommodate 180 people per 15 minute cycle. On the basis of the wheel being open 9am-7pm

Monday-Thursday and 9am till 11pm Friday-Sunday, this equates to an additional 52,000 visitors per week. This cannot be considered to be “small scale” and does not accord with Policy E3 of the Local Plan.

In addition, as has been highlighted by the Metropolitan Police, the area suffers from a high level of crime. The consequences of permitting the Ferris Wheel will only be heighten the potential for further crime and nuisance with the introduction of a use specifically designed to significantly increase footfall. there are clear economic benefits associated with the Market, the area is mixed use with many residents, and there is simply not an economic case that justifies the proposal.

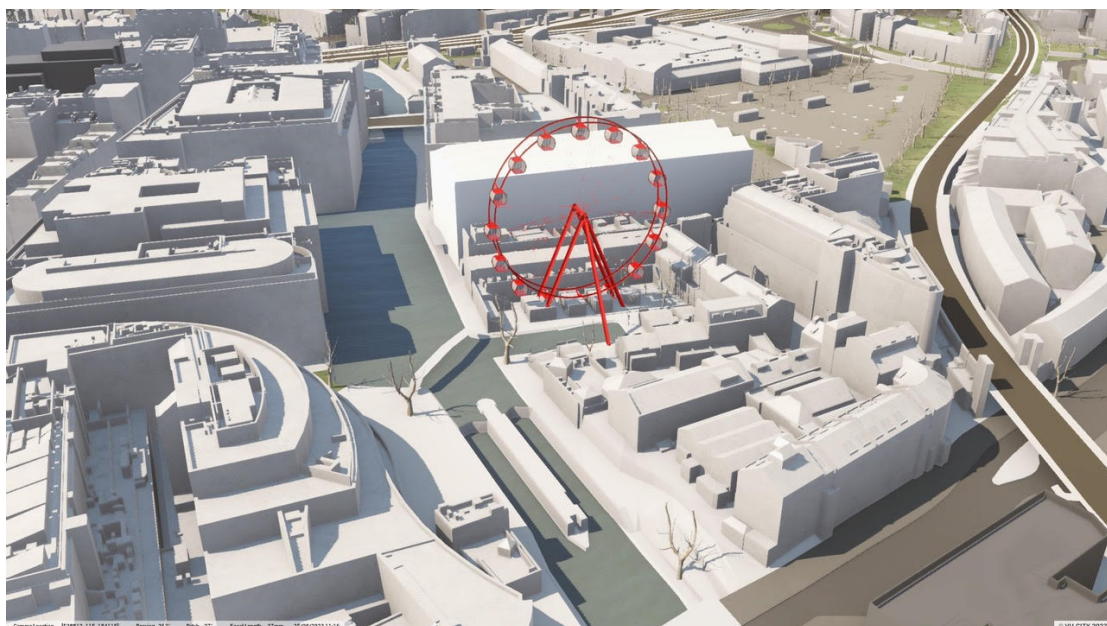
2. Adverse impact on Listed Buildings, and the Conservation Area

Local Plan Policy D2 - Heritage states in respect of Listed buildings: “The Council will resist proposals for a change of use... to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.”

As our client is concerned over this issue, specialist heritage advice has been sought.

We enclose a detailed historic buildings and townscape review of the application by Dorian Crone (BA. BArch. DipTP. RIBA.MRTPI. IHBC) of the Heritage Information consultancy.

They have concluded that the proposed observation wheel would cause a high level of “less than substantial” harm to the character and appearance of the Regent’s Canal Conservation Area and the significance of the Grade II listed Interchange Building, and a moderate level of “less than substantial” harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Towpath Bridge, Roving Bridge, Hampstead Road Lock, Regent’s Canal Information Centre, Hampstead Road Bridge, and Nos. 38-46 Jamestown Road by nature of the inappropriate design, scale and detrimental visual impact to the historic character of the site.



Whilst the submitted *Heritage Statement* acknowledges harm - in particular a moderate level of “less than substantial” harm to the Interchange Building and Conservation Area - the document suggests that any harm would be outweighed by the heritage and public benefits, with mitigation provided by the design and the temporary lifespan of the proposed wheel.

They consider that when the adverse impact of the design, scale and form of the observation wheel are taken into account for a minimum duration of 5 years with a potential risk for future renewals making it effectively a permanent structure, together with the more minimal though still harmful interventions by the provision of the pedestrian bridge and the physical interventions to the Interchange Building, the benefits fall short of outweighing the harm.

They also consider that the provision of the wheel will not enhance an appreciation and understanding of the history of this part of Camden and its heritage assets, and therefore does not constitute a tangible benefit. It is not considered that sufficient public benefit has therefore been provided to outweigh the high and moderate levels of “less than substantial” harm caused to the significance of the designated heritage assets, and therefore the proposal fails the test as set out in Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

In addition, great weight should be given to the conservation of the significance of a heritage asset, irrespective of the level of harm (NPPF, Paragraph 199). The high level of “less than substantial” harm caused by the proposed observation wheel has not been provided with a clear and convincing justification (as per Paragraph 200 of the NPPF) and insufficient weight has been given to the conservation of the significance of the Grade II listed buildings and structures affected by the proposals (in particular the Interchange Building), and the Regent’s Canal Conservation Area.

The notionally temporary lifespan is not considered to provide sufficient justification given the high and moderate levels of harm to the significance of these heritage assets which will be experienced daily (day and night) for a minimum of 5 years, and there is a risk that this could be made longer term or even permanent if economically successful. Indeed, the proposals may well set an unfortunate precedent within the Borough and Greater London area for the construction of inappropriate “temporary” development which severely detracts from the significance and settings of heritage assets and within Conservation Areas.

Following Heritage Information’s independent analysis, it is their professional opinion that the proposed observation wheel, fails to comply with national and local government policies and Historic England and local guidance, and will result in unjustified “less than substantial” harm to the settings of the listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Regent’s Canal Conservation Area. **Heritage Information suggest therefore that the applications should be refused on heritage grounds.**

3. Impact on nearby residential amenity

For the reasons identified above, the proposed wheel would result in a significant impact on the amenity of the residents in its vicinity.

Directly opposite the proposed wheel, on the opposite side of the canal is residential, who will be directly looked into by users of the wheel. Our clients live at 38-46 Jamestown Road, and we set out below what the view will be from the windows of their apartments.



It is clear that the privacy and amenity of the properties will suffer significant harm as the occupants of the pods on the wheel will be able to look directly into the windows of neighbouring homes. Such harm is directly contrary to Local Plan Policy A1 which places emphasis on the importance of maintaining suitable levels of privacy.

Furthermore, the London Plan encourages consideration of the home as a place for retreat and acknowledges that homes have a particular need for privacy.

London Plan policy further states that: “development impacting on existing residential areas should demonstrate that it maintains or improves the amenity of residents.”

The current applicants have not provided such a demonstration, and it is difficult to see how they could even attempt to do so.

Conclusion

The proposed development is presented in a highly misleading manner. It is completely inappropriate for the site, for a number of reasons:

1. The proposal constitutes large scale tourist development, which should be directed to Central London or the growth areas of King Cross, Holborn, Euston or Tottenham Court Road. The proposal is therefore contrary to **Local Plan Policy E3**.
2. Impact on the character of the Listed Buildings and their setting, and the Conservation Area, arising from the bulk, mass and overbearing appearance of the wheel, alongside considerable intensification of use, as



well as the probability of pressure to make the wheel a permanent fixture. The proposal is contrary to **Local Plan Policy D2**.

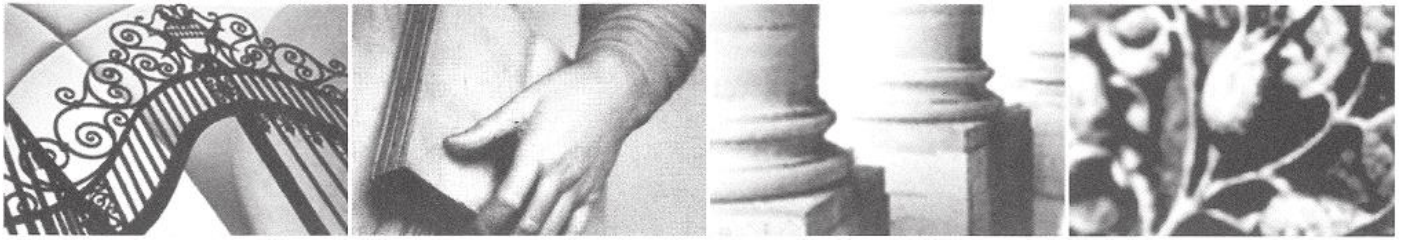
3. Impact on residential amenities, as a result of increased activity of many types, and the potential for invasion of privacy. The proposal is contrary to **Local Plan Policy A1, Section 2 of the Camden Amenity CPG**.

No community or wider benefits are advanced that would even start to counterbalance these serious breaches of policy.

We look forward to receiving written confirmation that this objection has been received and registered.

Yours Sincerely

Adam Gostling
Director



HERITAGE INFORMATION

87 East Sheen Avenue, London, SW14 8AX

FAO Alex Kresovic
Senior Planning Officer, London Borough of Camden
Planning Solutions Team
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
London
WC1H 9JE

12th April 2023

Dear Mr Kresovic

Camden Lock Market, Chalk Farm Road, London, NW1 8NH
Objection to Application Refs: 2022/3853/P and 2022/3940/L

1. We write to object in our capacity as heritage and design consultants to the above applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent at Camden Lock Market – in particular the provision of a 40m observation wheel within the West Yard. The applications are for:

Introduction of new exhibition space, flexible events and market uses through a change of use of the existing East Vaults, installation of new retail shopfronts within West Yard; creation of a new jetty within Dead Dog Basin and erection of a temporary observation wheel together with ancillary works and alterations to existing structures, surfaces and other public realm improvements and associated works.

2. This letter and commentary refers to and makes use of the most recent local and national guidance relating to the impact of development on the significance of heritage assets. It is therefore in the spirit of Paragraph 129 of the NPPF, which encourages local planning authorities to “make appropriate use of tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development”. This commentary has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 28th March 2023. It also refers to and makes use of the *National Design Guide* (2021) (ref. Appendix 2), *The Building in Context Toolkit* (2001) (ref. Appendix

3), *GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (December 2017), Historic England guidance *Temporary Structures in Historic Places* (2010), and the Local Authority's adopted *Regent's Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy* (2008). We have been involved in previous development schemes at Camden Lock Market and in the local area, and so are familiar with the site, its constituent elements and its setting.

3. We have reviewed the drawings and the supporting information submitted with the applications, including the Built Heritage Statement (amended August 2022), the Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) (amended August 2022), and the Design and Conservation Rebuttal (January 2023) – all prepared by Turley. We have also taken account of the consultation responses made by statutory consultees, and regional and local interest groups, including Historic England, the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS) and the Camden Railway Heritage Trust (CRHT).

The Proposed Observation Wheel

4. An understanding of the baseline heritage context of the application site is considered to have been sufficiently set out in the submitted *Heritage Statement* and *TVIA* and so a summary of the most salient points are provided here for context. The application site is located within Sub-Area 1 of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area, which includes an unusually intact concentration of Grade II statutorily listed buildings and structures relating to the historical development and former uses of the canal. The view west from Hampstead Road Lock is, in the words of Pevsner, a “*fine industrial landscape, framed by the LNW Railway warehouse and Gilbey's and culminating in a distant accumulator tower*” (quoted in the Conservation Area Appraisal). The Conservation Area Appraisal echoes the sentiment in stating that the concentration of industrial archaeology along the Camden section of the canal, with its associated railway features is of exceptional interest and quality - “*unparalleled in London*”. This highly significant composition is illustrated in Viewpoints 3 to 7 of the submitted TVIA. We consider that these viewpoints, which are dominated and defined by the former industrial uses of the site and canal, have exceptionally high receptor sensitivity. The submitted TVIA acknowledges that this composition is a high-value townscape with a concentration of intact historic townscape elements (TVIA, 2.24), producing a medium-high sensitivity (Table 4.1). According to the criteria for sensitivity provided in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 2013 (the criteria of which were used in the submitted TVIA), a medium-high sensitivity means the townscape has a high quality and distinctive character which is susceptible to change; indeed, Viewpoints 3 to 7 have been assessed as having a medium or high susceptibility to change in the submitted TVIA.
5. The historic buildings are an essential contributor to these views, which are dominated by the Grade II listed Interchange Building on the west side of the application site. The Grade II listed Roving Bridge and the Grade II listed lock are also focal points and highly animated. With the Grade II listed Regent's Canal Information Centre and the Grade II listed former Gilbey's factory (38-46 Jamestown Road), the sequence of functional elements associated with the formerly working canal, such as the locks, bridges, wharves, and towpath, and the industrial buildings and structures, are of particular interest

and make the principal contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole (submitted *Heritage Statement* 4.17). The Interchange Building, along with the surviving elements of the former canal infrastructure and Camden Goods Depot, represents one of the best preserved examples of 19th century transport infrastructure in England, and is demonstrative of the development of canal and rail goods shipment (*Heritage Statement*, 4.110). The remaining elements of historic setting, including the group value with the other contemporaneous Grade II listed structures contribute positively to the ability to appreciate and understand the architectural and historic interest of each of the listed buildings and structures (*Heritage Statement*, 4.112, 4.119, 4.125, 4.128, 4.130, 4.134, 4.137).

6. The Grade II listed Interchange Building in particular dominates this part of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area and the immediate canal/docks wharf complex which now comprises the West Yard of the Camden Market (Viewpoints 3 to 7 of the *TVIA*). The Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS) states the “*iconic*” former Interchange Warehouse is an “*outstanding exceptional industrial monument*” – a determining feature in the history and character of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. The submitted *Heritage Statement* acknowledges the importance and significance of the Interchange Building in defining the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area: “*the scale of the Interchange building and the projecting water tower to the northern end give the building a landmark status along the canal and surrounding area where it has a substantial presence*” (4.103).
7. Historic England guidance makes clear that an assessment of the contribution to significance of a view does not depend alone on the significance of the heritage assets in the view, but on the way the view allows that significance to be appreciated (GPA 3: Setting, para 30). It is considered that in the case of the Grade II listed Interchange Building in particular, the viewpoints from Hampstead Road Bridge and the Regent's Canal Information Centre, the Towpath Bridge and the Roving Bridge (all listed structures with which it shares historic group value) (Viewpoints 4 to 6 of the *TVIA*), as well as middle distance views from Primrose Hill in the protected panorama (Viewpoint 11 of the *TVIA*), allow the significance of the building to be better appreciated and understood as a landmark structure of considerable architectural and historic interest.
8. Indeed, the degree to which settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset or allow that significance to be appreciated includes how the heritage asset is experienced, which includes its visual dominance, prominence or role as a landmark, as well as the environmental factors such as busyness, movement and noise, as well as diurnal changes such as lighting at night (GPA 3: Setting, Step 2 Checklist). The Grade II listed Interchange Building has an acknowledged visual dominance, prominence and role as a landmark due to its robust architectural solidity, industrial form and scale in relation to its surroundings. The existing activities around its canal setting, including the bustling market and towpath, are not considered to detract from that prominence and experience. We therefore consider that the setting of the Interchange Building makes a strong positive contribution to an experience of its architectural and historic interest and therefore its significance.

9. The proposed addition of a 40m observation wheel within the West Yard is considered to have a severe detrimental impact on the setting of the Interchange Building (and thus also its significance), as well as a severely detrimental impact on the group value of the listed structures in the immediate context around the canal which form a highly significant group. It is also considered therefore, that there would be severely detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area given this group makes the principal contribution to the character and appearance of the area “as a whole”. The submitted *Heritage Statement and TVIA* acknowledge that the proposed wheel would distract from an appreciation of the external aesthetic qualities of the Interchange Building and the historic function relationships with the canal and related basins (5.28). The submitted reports acknowledge that “*there is a potential to distract from the contribution made by the group value of contemporary heritage assets on the canal that contribute positively to the listed building’s heritage significance*”, and also concede “*due to the total height, scale, movement, relative prominence of the observation wheel, and partial obscuring of the Interchange Building (as a landmark structure within the conservation area), this element of the Proposed Development will harm the significance of the conservation area for its duration*” (*Heritage Statement*, 5.29). The *Heritage Statement* concludes the proposals would cause “less than substantial” harm at the moderate position of the scale to the Interchange Building and Conservation Area (5.57), and “less than substantial” harm at the low end of the scale to other nearby listed structures. Our review of the impact of the proposals differs – for the reasons set out below, we consider that the observation wheel would cause “less than substantial” harm at the high end of the scale to the Interchange Building and Conservation Area, and “less than substantial” harm at the moderate position of the scale to other nearby statutorily listed buildings.
10. Despite the acknowledgement in the submitted *Heritage Statement* and *TVIA* of the significance of the grouping of listed structures, the high value and sensitivity of the townscape around the application site and the harmful impact of the proposed observation wheel, the reports attempt to justify the addition of the 40m observation wheel within the West Yard. This justification is provided by nature of the design of the wheel (assessed as referring to the industrial heritage of the area including exposed structural elements, and limited material and colour palette that takes cues from the local area), its temporary lifespan of 5 years, and that any harm would be outweighed by the public / heritage benefits offered by the scheme as a whole – including those which flow from the provision of the wheel itself.
11. We do not consider that the design of the proposed observation wheel provides anywhere near sufficient justification for the harm caused to this highly significant group of the Grade II listed buildings – in particular the Interchange Building. Whilst the use of dark metal could be said to generically reflect the industrial character of the site with some elements of local detail incorporated, the circular form of the wheel with its spokes and highly glazed gondolas will introduce a completely alien element that has no historical associations with the local context or the former uses of the wharves. Indeed, it is more akin to a theme park or fairground than the historic and existing commercial and industrial character of the canal-side buildings, wharves, docks and markets which is the acknowledged defining contributor to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and the Conservation Area as a whole. Whilst the spokes may allow some visual permeability when the wheel is static, the clear contrast to the solidity of the surrounding industrial architecture creates an

uncomfortable visual juxtaposition (also raised as a concern by Historic England). Moreover, the introduction of perceptible movement will accentuate the incongruous form within the setting – both facing the wheel from the east and approaching the West Yard along the towpath via the Grade II listed towpath bridge from the west (ref. Viewpoint 7 of the *TVIA*). At dusk or after dark, the lighting within the glazed gondolas will make this a highly intrusive and visible intervention. The design and form of the wheel would therefore be a highly distracting intervention which would appear in the foreground of views of the Grade II listed Interchange Building (ref. Viewpoints 4 and 5 of the *TVIA*) that would disrupt the highly significant character and group value the building shares with other nearby listed structures which define the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

12. At 40m in height, the scale of the proposed observation wheel would be completely inappropriate and incongruous in relation to the surrounding built form. The enclosed nature of the site, dense urban grain and built character comprising former industrial buildings 3 to 5 storeys is considered to be inappropriate for a structure of this height and scale. Whilst the southern part of the West Yard opens out into the canal, the yard is enclosed to the west by the substantial scale of the Interchange Building and to the north and east by the market buildings and the railway viaduct; the railway viaduct encloses the site to the north and is a visual barrier which contributes to the enclosed and compact character of the area. The built form enclosing the West Yard is of a broadly consistent scale and height of 3 to 5 commercial storeys – the Interchange Building comprises a four-storey rectilinear block with a distinctive water tower which acts as a local landmark enclosing the west side of the yard. The proposed wheel would dwarf and belittle the Interchange Building in highly significant views not only within the Conservation Area (ref. Viewpoints 3 to 7 of the *TVIA*), but also in the protected middle distance panorama from Promise Hill from where the wheel would add a standalone and competing element on the skyline (ref. Viewpoint 11 of the *TVIA*). In Viewpoint 3 further to the east from the Grand Union Towpath, the Interchange Building would be almost entirely obscured in the view westwards along the canal, with the wheel forming a new incongruous feature on the skyline in its place. We do not consider therefore, that the low adverse impacts on these views concluded in the *TVIA*, and a neutral very low impact on the view from Primrose Hill, are accurate reflections of the detrimental impact the wheel would have on the local townscape and settings of heritage assets.
13. The fact that the prominence of the Interchange Building and its dominance within the local context contributes a large part to an experience of its significance, the distraction from and competition with that prominence and dominance by a standalone alien and incongruous moving form of an inappropriately large scale, will harm the significance of the listed building. Historic England are also concerned that the proposed wheel would challenge the dominance and iconic nature of the Interchange Building by appearing as a “*prominent and eye catching object*” in the foreground and background of these key views of the Interchange Building – indeed, we consider it belittles the scale of the Interchange Building, making it appear more of a “dolls house” when viewed alongside such an imposing 40m structure.

14. The enclosed character of the site and surrounding dense urban townscape was assessed in the submitted *TVIA* as helping to contain the visual impact of the observation wheel. However, we consider that it only serves to accentuate the inappropriate scale and form of the wheel and its detrimental visual impact on the significance of heritage assets, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Where other similar observation wheels have been approved – most notably the London Eye and the Greenwich Wheel (dismantled in 2008), the townscape settings have been far more open, allowing for the provision of a large moving circular form with a sufficient breathing space to sustain the settings of nearby heritage assets without visually dominating them. The townscape and grain of the application site is entirely different – it is enclosed and dense, reflecting its historical uses, which amplifies the prominence of the historic architecturally robust industrial buildings, particularly the Interchange Building across the open space of the West Yard and canal. The introduction of a wheel of the proposed height and scale within this townscape context would be a substantial visual intrusion which would detract from the acknowledged high-quality industrial townscape (*“unparalleled in London”*), which also has an acknowledged high sensitivity to change. Historic England guidance states that temporary structures should be sited to minimise their impact on important views and disturbance of the visual character of historic areas (Temporary Structures, para. 9.3), but based on the evidence submitted in the *TVIA* and in our above commentary, this is not considered to be the case here – indeed, quite the reverse.
15. Historic England guidance on setting (GPA 3) makes it clear what factors should be addressed when assessing the likely impact of a development on setting and its implications for the significance of heritage assets. These include the position of the proposal in relation to key views to the heritage asset, its prominence, dominance and conspicuousness, competition with or distraction from the asset, dimensions scale and massing, the introduction of movement, diurnal change, change to the skyline, lighting effects and the introduction of a dominant element which is alien and incongruous to the general local character (GPA 3: Setting, Step 3 Checklist). In all cases, the proposed observation wheel is considered to fail to meet these criteria given its prominence, dominance and conspicuousness, competition with and distraction from key landmark historic buildings, the introduction of inappropriate movement and diurnal change, change to the skyline in key views and the introduction of a dominant element which is alien and incongruous to the general local character. For these reasons, we concur with Historic England that the proposed observation wheel will cause “less than substantial” harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Interchange building and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; that harm would be at the high end of the scale. A moderate level of “less than substantial” harm would be caused to the other nearby listed buildings and structures given the extent of visual intrusion into the group value and their townscape settings.
16. It is also considered that the viewpoints presented in the submitted *TVIA* do not entirely convey the true magnitude of the visual impact of the proposed observation wheel as experienced from the immediate townscape. During our site visit, we identified two additional viewpoints where the proposal would have a severe detrimental visual impact (these can be found in Appendix 4). The first is taken on the south side of the canal from the busy restaurant terraces adjacent to the Grade II listed Hampstead Road Lock. This is the third stage of a kinetic viewpoint which has been partially illustrated

in Viewpoints 4 and 5 of the *TVIA*. The movement westwards from the Grade II listed Hampstead Road Bridge would likely reveal more of the proposed wheel – its incongruous scale and moving circular form within the West Yard and diminishing the prominence of the Interchange Building with its distinctive water tower and distracting from the roving bridge and former Gilbey's factory. This kinetic view is experienced by numerous visitors, workers and residents on a daily basis and reveals the extent to which an experience of the heritage assets and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be compromised. The second additional view is located within the West Yard itself with the historic dock in the foreground and is likely to illustrate a higher degree of detrimental impact than the side-on view illustrated in Viewpoint 6 of the *TVIA*. The view illustrates the architectural solidity of the Interchange Building and its prominence and dominance on the west side of the site as a landmark building. The incongruous scale and alien form of the observation wheel would be very discernible from this viewpoint in the West Yard, visually competing with the Interchange Building and detracting from its architectural qualities and dominance as experienced across the open space of the West Yard. The visually permeable structure would create an awkward juxtaposition with the solidity of the historic building form, whilst the introduction of movement and lightspill from the gondolas would introduce an entirely inappropriate fairground character to this historic and highly significant industrial townscape.

17. The submitted *Heritage Statement* and *TVIA* place great emphasis on the temporary nature of the proposals providing justification and appropriate mitigation to the harmful visual impacts of the observation wheel, thereby causing a lower level of adverse impact than otherwise might be the case (*TVIA*, 4.25). Like Historic England and other local amenity groups, we are also concerned about the notionally "temporary" nature of the proposed wheel. Whilst the anticipated lifetime of a development should be taken into consideration according to Historic England guidance, the proposed observation wheel is not a seasonal attraction limited to a particular time of the year or particular event, but rather will likely operate almost every day of the year during both daytime and after dark. The guidance states that longer term or recurrent changes, even if notionally temporary, may have a more serious impact (Temporary Structures, para. 6.8). For example, the impact of a marquee erected for one weekend is much less than the same marquee erected for a whole year (para 6.10) – in this case, the proposal is for a substantial and visually dominating structure for a 5-year period. Moreover, if economically successful, the proposed observation wheel could be renewed for a longer term or even made effectively permanent by being continually renewed as a temporary permission. We consider therefore that any suggestion within the submitted *Heritage Statement* and *TVIA* that the notionally temporary lifespan of the wheel reduces the level of harm and adverse visual impact does not provide anywhere near sufficient justification given the potential for long-term or even permanent harm to the significance of the Interchange Building, the group value with other nearby listed structures, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole.
18. In terms of the public or heritage benefits offered by the scheme, these will be examined below in relation to the proposals within the east vaults of the Interchange Building and Dead Dog Basin. However, the submitted *Heritage Statement* identifies the provision of the wheel itself as bringing with it public and heritage benefits by nature of providing "*opportunities for visitors to gain a different*

*appreciation of the history of this part of Camden and the significance of nearby heritage assets, including the former historic & functional connections between canal and railway, including the legible spatial relationships and connections” (5.31). We do not consider this to be case and agree with the CRHT that the views from the top are likely to be underwhelming because the area is one of fine urban grain and enclosure as described above – notwithstanding any potential adverse amenity impacts on the residential buildings on the south side of the canal. Indeed, this different appreciation is unlikely to better reveal the significance or enhance an appreciation and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets and how they relate to each other over and above the existing historic experience from the canal-side wharves and associated canal structures. No justification has been provided to suggest the provision of the wheel in any way from a heritage perspective will help to fund the maintenance and repair of the listed buildings and structures – a potential benefit of a temporary structure described in the Historic England guidance (4.1). **We consider therefore that the design of the wheel, its notionally temporary lifespan, and any heritage benefits it might deliver, offer nowhere near sufficient justification or mitigation given the severe and harmful visual impacts on a highly significant group of listed buildings and structures which define the character and appearance of the Regent’s Canal Conservation Area as a whole.***

Proposals Associated with the Observation Wheel

19. The proposed provision of the observation wheel will also necessitate the provision of other interventions within the West Yard that will have an impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and settings of nearby listed buildings and structures. This includes a pedestrian bridge across the dock within the West Yard. We acknowledge that the design of the bridge with its metal balustrading and its physical intervention within the yard and basin are unlikely to cause harm to any historic fabric or surfaces, although its flat form is out of character with the arched forms of other nearby historic bridges – indeed, its uncharacteristic level form is dictated by the requirements for level access to the observation wheel.
20. Although it was completed in 1820, a section of Regent’s Canal, which ran from Paddington to Camden Town, was opened in 1816. Three docks were built at that time at Camden Town to provide wharfage. The West Yard still contains one of these original docks of the Regents Canal built in the 1820s and it is this dock which would be covered by the proposed pedestrian bridge and closed to canal boats as a result of the proposed observation wheel. This surviving dock is considered therefore to possess significance in its own right as a remnant of the former uses of the West Yard and the area’s industrial past – acknowledged within the submitted *Heritage Statement* (4.25). The suspension of the use of the dock for canal boats to and from the Regent’s Canal during the 5-year period (and potentially longer or permanent if the permission is renewed) and its partial covering by the bridge is considered to compromise an appreciation and understanding of its historic interest. The dock has already been subject to partial covering by modern decking which has diminished an appreciation and understanding of its historic interest, whilst its cessation of use (even if it remains water-filled) will further compromise its historic interest as one of the original still functioning parts of the canal. Whilst the proposed bridge has been presented as a temporary structure with the wheel, we have the same

concerns regarding its likely “temporary” lifespan and that there exists the potential for a longer-term if not permanent impact on the openness and use of the historic dock. Alongside the observation wheel, the bridge is considered to add to the visual clutter within the West Yard necessitated by the wheel itself which would likely be depicted in the second additional view suggested in Appendix 4. **The proposed bridge will detract from an appreciation and understanding of the dock and this part of the Conservation Area which is fundamentally connected to the canal and its associated structures** – indeed, the dock is one of the most significant historic features within the West Yard which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and settings of the listed structures associated with the functioning of the historic wharves.

Cumulative Harm to the Grade II Listed Interchange Building

21. We also consider that the proposed alterations and interventions to the Grade II listed Interchange Building are a material consideration in determining the overall planning balance of the applications. The submitted *Heritage Statement* recognises that the well-preserved internal construction and features within the Interchange Building and the integrity of that original construction (in terms of materiality and details) amplify the architectural interest (4.105). There are also elements that are considered to contribute to the architectural interest of the building by preserving the legibility of the original function and design as a former commercial warehouse and interchange building. Moreover, the retention of that plan form is part of the building’s architectural and historic interest, which provides evidence of the building’s original layout and function. Of note is the canal basin below, which facilitated the transfer of goods from the canal, to the warehouse, and finally to the railway (or vice versa); the dock is earlier than the building above and has been altered several times but is well preserved. It also has special architectural features, such as trap doors above and remaining operational elements, which demonstrate how it would have been used. *“This distinguishing feature is unique for warehouse buildings of this age and thus makes a strong contribution to the special interest of the building”* (4.111). Malcom Tucker’s Report to the British Waterways notes that *“A notable distinguishing aspect of the Interchange is the canal basin beneath it, allowing three-way transshipment. In its well-preserved retention of this feature within a railway warehouse, the Camden example is effectively unique”*.
22. The proposals involve a number of interventions what will involve the loss of historic fabric and the subdivision of spaces. Ten new openings are proposed within the highly significant masonry of the building overlooking the basin to enable access and views into Dead Dog Basin, whilst partitions of concrete blockwork construction are proposed for public facilities and refuse/recycling stores within the east vaults. The Conservation Officer raised concerns regarding the number of proposed openings in one of the oldest parts of the building and the subdivision of the east vaults.
23. These proposals largely reflect those consented in July 2016, when similar interventions to the Interchange Building were considered to be outweighed by the public and heritage benefits on offer (refs. 2015/4774/P and 2015/4812/L). Historic England have welcomed the current proposed works to the Interchange Warehouse and Dead Dog Basin given their similarity to the consented scheme and

the heritage benefits offered by the scheme in enabling a significantly enhanced appreciation and understanding of the architectural and historic interest of the east vaults and the basin through the provision of an exhibition space and improved public access. This does not mean that the proposed ten openings and subdivisions will constitute some “less than substantial” harm by diminishing the spatial quality of the vaults and removing some original fabric. Indeed, we agree with the CRHT that the proposed enclosure of a significant proportion of the space closest to the opening to the Regent’s Canal to be given over to waste disposal “*will detract greatly from a visual understanding of the relationship between the vaults, the basin and the canal, despite there being some limited access to the basin from the exhibition space*”. We therefore also agree with the submitted *Heritage Statement* (5.41) and *Rebuttal* that these interventions will likely result in a low level of “less than substantial” harm.

24. The previously consented applications in 2016 did not include the provision of a 40m observation wheel. Without the addition of the wheel, we would agree with the applicant that any low level of harm caused to the fabric and plan form of the Interchange Building would likely be outweighed by the benefits of providing a new exhibition space and public access, as well as ensuring a long-term sustainable use for this under-used space. Given the high level of “less than substantial” harm we (and Historic England) consider to be caused to the significance of the Interchange Building as a result of the observation wheel, as well as to the Conservation Area and other heritage assets, the low level of “less than substantial” harm caused by the physical interventions to the Interchange Building must be assessed as part of the overall cumulative harm caused by the proposals. We consider that whilst the 2016 consents are a consideration, the high level of harm caused by the currently proposed addition of the observation wheel, in addition to the other low levels of harm caused by the pedestrian bridge and the physical interventions to the Interchange Building (which otherwise may be outweighed as in 2016), should materially affect the planning balance of the overall scheme and make it less likely that the public/heritage benefits will outweigh the cumulative harm.

Policy and Guidance Considerations

25. ***The National Design Guide* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, January 2021)** (ref. Appendix 2) has informed the above commentary. The NDG is the national planning practice guidance for “beautiful, enduring and successful places”, although it does not appear to have been referred to in any of the submitted documentation. The NDG focuses on what it terms the “ten characteristics”. Of particular relevance here are the first two characteristics - Characteristic 1: the settings of heritage assets and the context of the site (appropriate form, appearance, scale, details and materials) in order that the proposal relates well to its surroundings; and Characteristic 2: reinforcing a coherent and distinctive identity (appropriate scale, height, materials and consideration of views) that relates well to the history and context of the site. As detailed above, we consider that the incongruous scale and alien form of the proposed observation wheel is considered to be highly unsympathetic to the local context – both in terms of its detrimental impact on the significance of the Grade II listed Interchange Building and on the settings of other nearby Grade II listed buildings which

make up a highly distinctive industrial townscape that defines the character and appearance of this part of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. The proposed observation wheel would dominate the experience of the significance of these heritage assets in locally important views and in the protected panorama from Primrose Hill, from where it would be an unattractive and inappropriate addition to a site which is historically significant for its industrial buildings and character – introducing an alien and distracting element more reminiscent of a fairground which does not relate to any way to the industrial warehousing and character of the canal. The proposed design does not relate to the historic context of the area and does not reinforce a coherent and distinctive identity within this part of the Conservation Area; it has not respected or reflected the historic significance of the site and it fails to respond to the scale and massing and relationships between buildings, views and landmarks, and the scale and proportions of buildings.

26. This review has also evaluated the proposals according to the eight principles of the ***Building in Context Toolkit (2001)*** which was formulated by English Heritage and CABI to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts (see Appendix 3). We do not consider that the proposals have taken account of the eight principles. Whilst the submitted *Heritage Statement* and *TVIA* have assessed the significance of the site and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and settings of nearby listed buildings (Principle 1), the proposals have not taken into account the baseline assessments: the incongruous form and scale of the observation wheel mean it will not sit happily in the pattern of existing development (Principle 4), important views which contribute positively to experiencing the significance of a number of statutorily listed buildings have not been respected (Principle 5), the scale of neighbouring buildings, in particular the Grade II listed Interchange Building has not been respected (Principle 6), and the use of materials which, although present within the Conservation Area, does not define its character and appearance (Principle 7). The observation wheel is not considered to add variety and texture to its context (Principle 8), but rather will appear as an alien standalone form which is visually uncomfortable as it has not taken into account its sensitive context.
27. Historic England guidance ***Temporary Structures in Historic Places (2010)*** makes it clear that whilst there should not be a presumption against temporary structures simply because they are visible in the historic environment, they should also sustain or enhance the significance of an asset and the contribution of its setting; it should also be an appropriate design for its context that makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment; and it should better reveal the significance of a heritage asset and enhance the enjoyment of it and the sense of place (para 4.1). It is considered that the proposed observation wheel will detract from the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of this highly significant grouping of historic buildings within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. The proposed observation wheel is not considered to sustain the significance of the heritage assets; indeed it severely compromises the contribution the setting of the listed Interchange Building makes to the significance of that listed building. We concur with Historic England that the observation wheel would provide “a new focal point to this historic collection of buildings and spaces”.

28. The Council's adopted **Regent's Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2008)** states that new development should respect the scale of the particular location within the area and should complement the appearance, character and setting of the existing buildings and structures and the canal. "*Building heights should not interfere with views to local landmarks*". For the reasons set out in this commentary, the proposed observation wheel is not considered to comply with this management strategy by nature of its incongruous scale and alien form which will diminish the positive contribution made by the existing landmark Interchange Building in particular, and other listed structures in significant views from within the Conservation Area and in the more distant protected panoramic view from Primrose Hill. The scale and form are considered highly inappropriate in this part of the Conservation Area within the West Yard that is enclosed by historic industrial built form which contributes significantly to the varying character of the canal.
29. It is not considered that the proposed observation wheel blends comfortably with and is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. The proposal will have a substantial visual impact within the townscape that will detract from the defining industrial architecture, character and appearance of this part of the canal, which will be highly detrimental to the settings of nearby listed buildings and to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole. The proposal is not considered to be of a high standard of design sympathetic to the site by nature of its incongruous scale and form; it does not respect the local context and detracts from an experience of the historic environment and heritage assets in immediate and more distant views. The proposal is not considered to be successfully integrated with its surroundings and would adversely affect the historic character of this part of the canal and the settings of a highly significant group of listed buildings, contrary to **Policy D3** of the London Plan (2021) and **Policy D1** of the adopted Local Plan (2017). We do not therefore consider that the proposed building meets the criteria for good design as it is unsympathetic to the local character and historic environment (as also required by **Paragraph 130** of the NPPF).
30. In addition, the proposal fails to protect or enhance the settings of a number of Grade II listed buildings whose significance and settings would be adversely affected by the proposed development, and there would also be an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The detrimental impact is related to visual considerations as described in this commentary, and also to intangible elements such as historical association and environmental experience. It is considered that the applicants have not taken sufficient steps to maximise enhancement and to minimise harm to the significance and settings of these heritage assets (as per Step 4 of the Historic England guidance on Setting – GPA 3). It is considered therefore that the proposed observation wheel will cause harm to the significance of listed buildings by nature of the adverse impact on their settings and will fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area for a minimum of 5 years, but with a potential risk of a longer-term renewal of even permanent lifespan – contrary to **Policy D2** of the adopted Local Plan (2017) and **Policy HC1** of the London Plan (2021).

Conclusion

31. Overall, we consider the proposed observation wheel would cause a high level of "less than substantial" harm to the character and appearance of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area and the significance of the Grade II listed Interchange Building, and a moderate level of "less than substantial" harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Towpath Bridge, Roving Bridge, Hampstead Road Lock, Regent's Canal Information Centre, Hampstead Road Bridge, and Nos. 38-46 Jamestown Road by nature of the inappropriate design, scale and detrimental visual impact to the historic character of the site. Whilst the submitted *Heritage Statement* acknowledges harm – in particular a moderate level of "less than substantial" harm to the Interchange Building and Conservation Area – the document suggests that any harm would be outweighed by the heritage and public benefits, with mitigation provided by the design and the temporary lifespan of the proposed wheel. We consider that when the adverse impact of the design, scale and form of the observation wheel are taken into account for a minimum duration of 5 years with a potential risk for future renewals making it effectively a permanent structure, together with the more minimal though still harmful interventions by the provision of the pedestrian bridge and the physical interventions to the Interchange Building, the benefits fall short of outweighing the harm. As indicated above, we consider that the provision of the wheel will not enhance an appreciation and understanding of the history of this part of Camden and its heritage assets, and therefore does not constitute a tangible benefit. It is not considered that sufficient public benefit has therefore been provided to outweigh the high and moderate levels of "less than substantial" harm caused to the significance of the designated heritage assets, and therefore the proposal fails the test as set out in **Paragraph 202** of the NPPF.
32. Great weight should be given to the conservation of the significance of a heritage asset, irrespective of the level of harm (NPPF, **Paragraph 199**). The high level of "less than substantial" harm caused by the proposed observation wheel has not been provided with a clear and convincing justification (as per **Paragraph 200** of the NPPF) and insufficient weight has been given to the conservation of the significance of the Grade II listed buildings and structures affected by the proposals (in particular the Interchange Building), and the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. The notionally temporary lifespan is not considered to provide sufficient justification given the high and moderate levels of harm to the significance of these heritage assets which will be experienced daily (day and night) for a minimum of 5 years, and there is a risk that this could be made longer term or even permanent if economically successful. Indeed, the proposals may well set an unfortunate precedent within the Borough and Greater London area for the construction of inappropriate "temporary" development which severely detracts from the significance and settings of heritage assets and within Conservation Areas. Following our independent analysis, it is our professional opinion that the proposed observation wheel, for the reasons stated, fails to comply with national and local government policies and Historic England and local guidance, and will result in unjustified "less than substantial" harm to the settings of the listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area. **We suggest therefore that the applications should be refused on heritage grounds.**

33. For these reasons, we urge that the applications are recommended for refusal by planning officers and that the London Borough of Camden refuses the applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent on heritage grounds.

Yours sincerely

Dorian A. T. A. Crone BA. BArch. DipTP. RIBA.MRTPI. IHBC
Heritage and Design Consultant

Daniel Cummins MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC
Historic Environment Consultant

Appendix 1: Brief Summary CVs

DORIAN A.T.A. CRONE BA. BArch. DipTP. RIBA.MRTPI. IHBC

Chartered Architect & Town Planner - Heritage Design Consultant

Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), ICOMOS UK and Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. He is Chairman of the City Heritage Society and a member of the City Conservation Area Advisory Committee. Dorian is a Scholar of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and Chairman of the Drake and Dance Scholarship Trusts.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a panel member of the John Betjeman Design Award and the City of London Heritage Award, and is a Design Review Panel member of the Design Council, Design: South West, and the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Lewisham, Islington and Wandsworth. Dorian has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award along with a number other public sector and commercial design awards.

Dr DANIEL CUMMINS MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC

Historic Environment Consultant

Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading. Daniel has a Master's degree in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He has an excellent working knowledge of the legislative and policy framework relating to the historic environment. Daniel has extensive experience in projects involving interventions to listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, providing detailed assessments of significance and impact assessments required for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission.

Appendix 2: National Design Guide Characteristics (Excerpts)

1. Context is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.

C1 Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context

Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It enhances positive qualities and improves negative ones. Some features are physical, including:

- the existing built development, including layout, form, scale, appearance, details, and materials;
- local heritage – see below – and local character;
- landform, topography, geography and ground conditions;
- landscape character, drainage and flood risk, biodiversity and ecology;
- access, movement and accessibility;
- environment – including landscape and visual impact, microclimate, flood risk, noise, air and water quality;
- views inwards and outwards;
- the pattern of uses and activities, including community facilities and local services; and
- how it functions.

Well-designed new development is integrated into its wider surroundings, physically, socially and visually. It is carefully sited and designed, and is demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing situation, including:

- the landscape character and how places or developments sit within the landscape, to influence the siting of new development and how natural features are retained or incorporated into it;
- patterns of built form, including local precedents for routes and spaces and the built form around them, to inform the layout, form and scale;
- the architecture prevalent in the area, including the local vernacular and other precedents that contribute to local character, to inform the form, scale, appearance, details and materials of new development.

C2 Value heritage, local history and culture

When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.

Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by:

- the history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences;
- the significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing;
- the local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details

2. The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses.

I1 Respond to existing local character and identity

Local identity is made up of typical characteristics such as the pattern of housing, and special features that are distinct from their surroundings. These special features can be distinguished by their uses and activity, their social and cultural importance, and/or their physical form and design. Most places have some positive elements of character, particularly for their users. These can help to inform the character of a new development.

Well-designed new development is influenced by:

- an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents;
- the characteristics of the existing built form;
- the elements of a place or local places that make it distinctive; and
- other features of the context that are particular to the area – see Context .

This includes considering:

- the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements;
- the height, scale, massing and relationships between buildings;
- views, vistas and landmarks;
- the scale and proportions of buildings;
- façade design, such as the degree of symmetry, variety, the pattern and proportions of windows and doors, and their details;
- the scale and proportions of streets and spaces;
- hard landscape and street furniture;
- soft landscape, landscape setting and backdrop;
- nature and wildlife, including water;
- light, shade, sunshine and shadows; and
- colours, textures, shapes and patterns.

I2 Well-designed, high quality and attractive

Well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include:

- adopting typical building forms, features, materials and details of an area;
- drawing upon the architectural precedents that are prevalent in the local area, including the proportions of buildings and their openings;
- using local building, landscape or topographical features, materials or planting types;
- introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places;
- creating a positive and coherent identity that residents and local communities can identify with.

Appendix 3: The Building in Context Toolkit

The Building in Context Toolkit grew out of the publication **Building in Context**™ published by English Heritage and CABI in 2001. The purpose of that publication was to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts. The founding and enduring principle is that all successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and character appraisal to fully understand context.

The eight Building in Context principles are:

Principle 1

A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.

Principle 2

A successful project will relate to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land.

Principle 3

A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.

Principle 4

A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it.

Principle 5

A successful project will respect important views.

Principle 6

A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings.

Principle 7

A successful project will use materials and building methods which are as high quality as those used in existing buildings.

Principle 8

A successful project will create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

Appendix 4: Additional Significant Viewpoints



