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Ms Kathryn Moran
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3777

Our ref: P00481171

7 October 2015

Dear Ms Moran

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015 &
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
CAMDEN LOCK MARKET SITE, CHALK FARM ROAD, LONDON, NW1 8NH
Application No 2015/4774/P**

Thank you for your letter of 7 October 2015 notifying Historic England of the above application. We have been involved in extensive pre-application discussions regarding this site and are pleased that our comments have been taken on board in these final proposals.

Summary

We acknowledge that the proposals include the demolition of a number of buildings that are identified within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area Statement as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is our view that these 1980s buildings make a very modest contribution to the conservation area. The proposed replacement buildings, although contemporary in design, are of an appropriate scale and make use of traditional materials. In that regard, they preserve the conservation area from harm. In addition, there are many obvious heritage and urban design benefits associated with the proposals, including the enhancement of the grade II listed Interchange Building and other unlisted buildings of merit.

Historic England Advice

Our statutory remit is the impact of the proposals on the historic environment. Our advice below is based on an understanding of the historic environment affected by the proposals, and an assessment within the context of national planning policy and legislation as to whether the proposals harm, retain or enhance this significance.

Significance of the historic environment

The land currently occupied by the Camden Lock Market falls within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area and was part of a former goods yard established by the London and Birmingham Railway in 1841 for the interchange of goods between rail and the Regent's Canal. The grade II listed Interchange Warehouse and many of the



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smaller and simpler C19 warehouse buildings associated with the former goods yard are still retained on the site and serve to frame the original canal basin courtyard. These elements of the former goods yard possess historical value for their role in illustrating the former industrial history of the site and aesthetic value in varying degrees for their architecture. All of the surviving Victorian structures make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area and to the setting of other grade II listed structures nearby including the roving bridge, double canal lock and Hampstead Road Bridge.

This part of the former goods yard experienced considerable change due to the establishment of the market in the 1980s. During that time a number of new buildings were erected, including a new market hall complex in a C19 warehouse style with ornate metal market canopy and a number of vernacular style buildings of 1-3 storeys. These new buildings partly enclose the canal basin courtyard and create a series of public spaces known as East Yard, Middle Yard and West Yard. The Middle Yard and West Yards are particularly characterful and retain many of the original surface finishes associated with the former goods yard and the original canal dock, which has been partially filled with timber decking. In addition to the original C19 buildings, we understand that many of the buildings dating from the 1980s are identified in Camden's conservation area statement as making a positive contribution to the conservation area and, whilst relatively modern, are considered to add to the character of the yard spaces and the setting of the canal and associated listed structures. We agree that the 1980s buildings complement the positive contribution made by the authentic Victorian structures and spaces within the conservation area, but their lack of authenticity means that, overall, their positive contribution is modest.

The proposals

The current proposals, designed by Piercy and Company Architects, are intended to increase the amount and quality of market and other retailer offers on the site. On the east side of the site, they propose a number of alterations and extensions to the 1980s market hall complex, including the provision of a new basement level access route from the canal; replacement of the market canopy over the West Yard; and the remodelling and extension of the existing frontage onto Middle Yard. The adjacent Dingwalls Warehouse and associated horse stair would be retained. The existing 1-3 storey 1980s market buildings enclosing the Middle Yard and facing north onto Camden Lock Place would be replaced by new buildings of 3-5 storeys (equivalent) grouped around a new yard arrangement that would be open to the canal. The West Yard would contain a small pavilion building adjacent to the canal that would also serve to provide access to a series of high level walkways and bridges that would flow around the market site and would provide access to the various buildings. The proposals would include the removal of the existing 1980s walkways adjacent to the existing buildings on the west side of West Yard and their replacement with a contemporary arrangement with glazed infills below that would allow for the retail units to formally extend into the yard. The existing vacant basement area of the



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Interchange Warehouse would be bought into retail use with direct access from Camden Lock Place and West Yard. This would include the provision of a glazed floating box projection over Dead Dog Basin and the provision of additional window openings allowing views into this secret canal inlet, which lies beneath the Interchange Building. The existing historic surface finishes will be re-laid and new level pathways through the site will be provided.

National Policy and Legislation

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the obligation on local planning authorities to pay special regard to safeguarding the special interest of listed buildings and their settings, and preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for decision making on development proposals. At the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development', a key component of which includes protecting and enhancing the historic environment. In general terms, the document places great weight on: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; their potential to contribute to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the historic environment's local distinctiveness.

Specific policies relevant to the current proposals include paragraph 131, which states that local authorities should look for new development to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, and that new development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 132 states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when the impact of a proposed development is being considered, and notes that significance can be harmed or lost through alterations or destruction or development within the setting. Paragraph 134 advises that in cases where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including securing its optimum viable use.

Historic England Position

In general, we support the broad design approach to the site and believe that the new buildings will be of high quality design. They will therefore complement and enhance the character of the conservation area and the retained historic buildings. We welcome the proposed new and accessible routes through the site and the reuse of historic street surface finishes, which should be subject to further detailed design by condition. Our views on specific aspects of the proposals are set out below:

1980s Market Hall Complex and Dingwalls Warehouse



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We believe that the proposals affecting this part of the site are sympathetically designed and compatible with the character of the retained buildings, the surrounding conservation area and the setting of the adjacent listed bridge and canal lock, and we welcome the positive regeneration of these buildings.

Middle Yard

The proposals include the removal of a number of existing buildings that date from the 1980s, which are designed in a vernacular style. These buildings are considered to sit comfortably in the context of the surrounding conservation area, but they lack authenticity and are not integral to the special character of the conservation area or the settings of nearby listed buildings. The proposed replacement buildings are contextual in their design and incorporate forms, materials and colours that reflect the surrounding environment. In our view, they play a similar role within the conservation area to the buildings they will replace but are of higher quality design, and in that regard they will preserve the conservation area from harm. We also welcome the proposed new route along Middle Yard.

West Yard

The proposals will result in the removal of C20 market structures and the provision of high quality contemporary structures and walkways. We consider that the proposed new buildings, whilst contemporary, complement the surrounding historic environment.

Basement of Interchange Building

We welcome the proposals to bring the basement of the Interchange Warehouse back into use and to introduce visibility through to Dead Dog Basin. This area of the site is of high heritage significance which will be further revealed and enhanced through the proposals.

In summary, the development site comprises a large area that retains a strong historic character and contains one listed building and several unlisted buildings that contribute positively to the character of the surrounding conservation area and the setting of nearby listed buildings. The proposals entail significant intervention that will change the appearance of the area. In our view, the changes have the potential to enhance the significance of the conservation area and the setting of the grade II listed Interchange Warehouse. The proposals will clearly provide a number of heritage and urban design benefits, including the regeneration of buildings that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and the setting of neighbouring listed buildings; the provision of accessible new routes through the site, including a new link to the canal through Middle Yard; the provision of high quality new buildings; the bringing back into use of the basement of the Interchange Warehouse and the further revealing of this area and the adjacent Dead Dog Basin.

We believe the proposals accord with policy advice in the NPPF, which suggests that when considering the design of new development, decisions should ensure that the



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development responds to local character and distinctiveness and reflects of the identity of local surroundings and materials (paragraphs 58 and 131). Paragraph 60 in the NPPF advises that architectural styles or tastes should not be imposed but that it is proper to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Should the Council be minded to approve these proposals, we would recommend that conditions are placed in order to ensure that the scheme is executed to the highest quality, including details of the proposed architectural treatment of the buildings and surrounding landscape, and samples of materials, as appropriate.

Recommendation

For the reasons set out in this letter, we support the proposals in principle, and are content for your Council to determine the applications as you see fit. Should the Council be minded to approve these proposals, we would recommend that conditions are placed in order to ensure that the scheme is executed to the highest quality, including details of the proposed architectural treatment of the buildings and surrounding landscape along with samples of materials, as appropriate.

It is not necessary to consult us again on this application. Please send us a copy of the decision notice in due course. This will help us to monitor actions related to changes to historic places.

Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).

Yours sincerely



Claire Brady

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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