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Jeremy Content
Cornwall Council (West 1)
Planning and Building Control
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Our ref: CSE-19213

Dear Jeremy Content

**CORNWALL COUNCIL: SOUTH QUAY, HAYLE HARBOUR
PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: PA10/08142**

Thank you for consulting the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) about this proposal. Following a site visit, a meeting with the design team and local authority, the planning application drawings, Design and access statement, Landscape design statement and Heritage of Hayle assessment of significance was considered at an internal review meeting on 20 December 2010 chaired by Jim Eyre, with panel member Tim Ronalds, and design review staff. CABE's views, which supersede all views that may have been expressed previously, are set out below. This is our formal response to the planning application.

Summary

In principle, we have no objection to a supermarket-led mixed use development on South Quay given that this site has historically accommodated large industrial sheds. However, the local authority should satisfy itself that the size, positioning and design of the foodstore will enhance the quayside and surrounding streetscape, ensuring the scheme is well linked to the town centre and pays full regard to the special qualities of this unique World Heritage Site. We think the proposals offer some improvements on the previously withdrawn planning submission for this site, revealing a better understanding of their context, for example, in orientating the foodstore towards the town centre and the quayside. We also support the decision to submit a detailed planning application for the retail and leisure proposals. However, in our view, the new scheme does not satisfy the important criteria outlined above. In particular, the design team has not demonstrated that a foodstore of the footprint proposed, albeit

Commission for Architecture
and the Built Environment

The government's advisor
on architecture, urban design
and public space

reduced in scale from the previous submission, can be comfortably accommodated on this site whilst ensuring a sufficiently active public realm onto the quayside, car park and surrounding highways. Equally, whilst we acknowledge efforts to reflect the local vernacular in the approach to built form, in our view, the scheme does not yet achieve the design quality one should expect on such a highly sensitive site. We are, therefore, unable to support the scheme in its current form.

Hayle Harbour masterplan

We accept that South Quay may be the most appropriate part of Hayle Harbour for the first phase of regeneration because of its proximity to the existing town centre, although this marks a departure from the approved Hayle Harbour masterplan prepared by the same developer. Given the site's pivotal location within this highly sensitive quayside setting, the design team's decision to submit a detailed planning application for the retail proposals is welcomed. The attempts to ensure that the proposals better reflect the aspirations expressed within the Hayle Harbour masterplan for an intimate scaled, mixed-use development at South Quay that is well connected to the town centre are also understood. However, in our view, it has not yet been demonstrated that the proposals have satisfied the demands of this challenging brief whilst securing both a public realm and built form of a quality that reflects the specific needs of this important quayside location.



Site planning

Any development on South Quay needs to respond to the specific character of its location and acknowledge its special qualities; including the varied waterfront conditions, the viaduct and the history of the town of Hayle and its designation as a World Heritage Site. We understand that South Quay has historically housed large industrial sheds and, therefore, we would support the principle of locating a foodstore of a significant footprint on the site, on the basis that a bespoke solution that draws on these qualities can be secured. We recognise the design team's efforts to create a design that responds to these considerations in the site diagram. The decision to position the foodstore and cinema building closest to the town centre is well judged, as is the orientation of the foodstore onto Penpol Creek to try to animate this part of the quayside. We are also pleased to note the proposals for enhanced pedestrian connections to Foundry Square and the train station, which include the commitment to a new footbridge link to Penpol Terrace, as envisaged by the masterplan.

However, notwithstanding these positive moves, in our view, it will be very difficult to achieve a scheme of a high enough quality in architectural and urban design terms with a foodstore of the footprint currently proposed. We support the principle of wrapping the foodstore with active uses like the cinema. However, we think that the brief for a 55,000 square feet store limits the effectiveness of this strategy. A smaller foodstore might have provided an opportunity for smaller retail units to be located on

the Penpol Creek promenade, ensuring a genuinely active frontage along its full length. As proposed, other than the café and foodstore entrance at its northern end, the building's engagement with the public realm is limited to the visual animation it provides from behind its glass frontage during the day. Further, a smaller foodstore might have allowed for the service yard to be concealed behind other uses rather than presenting a blank elevation to the principal access route into the site. We acknowledge the challenge of accommodating store servicing. However, for residents and shoppers arriving at South Quay on foot the blank wall of the service yard will feel especially unwelcoming, particularly after dark when there will be no passive surveillance on this street.



We would question the success of the two stand-alone retail units backing onto the main surface car park in two respects. Firstly, in urban design terms they function poorly as a bridging element between the foodstore and the proposed housing to the north, which seems disengaged from the rest of the development as a result. Secondly, whilst these two units might help animate the quayside, like the foodstore, they turn their backs to the main car park. Whilst we acknowledge that the location of the car park is driven both by commercial needs and the desire to preserve key views across the harbour, these shortcomings threaten to create an unwelcoming and unsafe space at the heart of the site. Unless this is resolved, its attractiveness as a public space with any reference to the site's historic associations will be significantly undermined. The relationship of the mews housing to its northern edge will also have a bearing on how this space is experienced. As proposed, the pedestrian routes connecting the two appear indirect, ungenerous and secondary to the highways layout.

Built form, massing and architectural expression

This is a very challenging site on which to design a supermarket of this scale. We recognise the attempt to reflect the local vernacular in the buildings proposed. The scale, form and expression of the retail units proposed opposite the Jewson's site on Carnsew Road work well as a contemporary interpretation of traditional drying sheds found locally. However, a mixed-use foodstore building of the scale and complexity proposed for South Quay generates a very different challenge to resolve in design terms which, in our view, has not been achieved in its form, massing or architectural expression. In particular, there needs to be greater clarity about the way blocks, roofs and materials relate to one another. As illustrated in the view from the south-west (Drawing 0179-SK-113), the cinema block, staff offices and back-up areas collide with the foodstore to create a visually awkward composition of forms. This is exacerbated by the uncomfortable juxtaposition of pitched and flat roofs, shown in the drawing noted above and the CGI illustrating the Penpol Creek elevation, where they appear to run into one another in an awkward way. The saw-tooth building line establishes a weak street frontage onto Carnsew Road and a pedestrian realm that is

compromised by the series of corners facing onto the pavement. The vestigial areas of landscape do little to resolve this condition. The clash of building materials, in particular the horizontal banding of the brickwork with the cladding systems employed on the foodstore, also requires particular attention to resolve.

In light of the shortcomings in the design and site planning noted above we are unable to support the planning application in its current form.

Please keep CABA in touch with the progress of this scheme. If there is any point that requires clarification, please telephone me.



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Freeman', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Freeman
Design review advisor
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cc	Alan Gaskell	Mountford Pigott
	Dave Slatter	Cornwall Council
	Mark Pearson	Creating Excellence
	Simon Ramsden	English Heritage

Declaration of Interest

Liz Peace is a CABA commissioner and is also chief executive of the British Property Federation. In this role, she does not have direct involvement in development schemes proposed by Federation members.

Public scheme

As this scheme is the subject of a planning application, we will publish our views on our website, www.cabe.org.uk

Affiliated panels

CABA is affiliated with independent design review panels which commits them all to shared values of service, the foundation of which are the 10 key principles for design review. Further information on affiliation can be found by visiting our website: www.cabe.org.uk/design-review/regional