

planningnorth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Your reference: P/LBC/2022/05674
Our reference: 181197

20th February 2023

Dear Ms Gould,

RE: P/LBC/2022/05674 Alteration & conversion of The Maltings to create flexible commercial (Use Class E)/community (Use Class F2) uses & parking purposes at basement floor & for residential (Use Class C3) at ground to fifth floors (46 flats); with external alterations, extension to existing basement & erection of side extensions up to six storeys. The Maltings and Maltings Mews Pope Street / Eldridge Street Dorchester Dorset, DT1 1QT

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. The proposals were presented to the Society's Buildings Committee, a group of architects, historians and heritage professionals. Following their advice we offer this **objection**.

The Maltings is a Grade II listed building which forms part of the historic Eldridge Pope brewery. Constructed in 1879 by the important local architect *G. R. Crickmay* the building is designed in a robust *rundbogenstil* or Romanesque-revival style. Despite a fire in 1922 and some additions, the building remains a good example of a late 19th century maltings design. Interiorly the building retains its basement structure, and evidence of furnaces and drying kilns, which make a strong contribution to the legibility and significance of the building.

Following the closure of the Eldridge Pope Brewery the site has been redeveloped with demolition of much of the brewery site with retention of the historic, listed buildings. The consented new development is constructed in style completely at odds with the historic buildings and these do not make a positive contribution to setting or significance of the listed buildings. We note that initial and subsequent planning applications envisaged a residential building to the rear of the site and repurposing the Maltings as an arts venue, however, funding for this has not been forthcoming.

This application continues to propose a residential building to the rear of the site (Maltings Mews), and redevelopment of the Maltings for residential and commercial/community use. Both aspects of the proposal raise serious concern.

The Maltings would be converted to 46no apartments with a small amount of commercial/community space. As proposed this would involve the removal of

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substantial parts of the internal structure, alterations to the historic elevations of the building and the addition of two extensions.

The interior and exterior alterations would harm the significance of the building by the removal of substantial parts of the historic structure and subdivision of significant internal spaces which contribute to the legibility of the building as a historic maltings. The exterior alterations, especially the alterations to fenestration and roof lights would disfigure the substantially intact exterior of the building. Ultimately, the structural treatment of the building, which seeks to enable an unsuitably intensive development, would result in a building which is, in essence, facaded.

Furthermore, while extensions to the Maltings may be acceptable in principle the proposed designs are jaunty and bear no relation to the existing building or the surrounding historic context. The extension to the eastern end of the building is substantially higher than the historic structure and would overbear it, harming its significance.

This scale of development when coupled with the proposed Maltings Mews would harm the significance of the building and its setting. The Mews would be noticeably taller than the Maltings and serve to hem it in when coupled with the taller new buildings opposite the site, reducing the dominance of the historic brewery buildings in the area. This would increase the impression that the historic buildings are lost within a new development, rather than forming the focus of it, as they ought.

Considering the scale of the harm that would be caused we question the suitability of residential conversion of the Maltings. While we realise that conversion to an arts centre has failed, the application documentation does not outline what options were explored since then for the reuse of the building. Any cultural/commercial use would likely cause less harm to the significance of the building, and it is important that all options have been explored.

Policy

The *Weymouth Avenue Development Plan* provides robust guidance on the treatment of listed buildings in redeveloping the area, stating for the buildings themselves that:

'4.4.4. Externally, the Brewery buildings are particularly distinctive in terms of their design, materials and detailing. For example, they have distinctive metal windows combined with the ornate brick detailing... Any proposed alterations to existing door and window openings will need to be considered carefully in terms of the impact that any such changes will have upon the elevational character and rhythm of the building.'

And in the Executive Summary:

'Any scheme of conversion should respect the historic plan form of the buildings and retain significant fixtures and fittings both externally and internally.'

The Plan continues to treat development within the setting of the listed buildings:

'4.4.6. In particular, any new development within the site should not undermine the dominance of the Victorian group of buildings, and where possible should reinforce its industrial character. In this respect, new buildings should be in harmony with, or complementary to, the existing listed structures.'

It is clear that these proposals would not satisfy the requirements of the Plan, resulting in harmful alteration to significant parts of the listed building, extensions, and nearby development that is out of character and overbearing.

The NPPF states:

'199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation'

'206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.'

These proposals would not result in conservation of the listed building, but serious harm to its significance, both through alterations to the structure of the building and development within its setting. Considering this harm we **object** to the proposal and recommend that consent is refused.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Connor McNeill

Conservation Adviser