

# ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

## MEMORANDUM

**From:** Janine Riley  
Conservation Architect

**To:** Clare Eynon  
Development Control Officer

**Copy to:** Ian Thomson

**Extn:** 1305

**Our Ref:** JR/LT/EC58

**Date:** 23 August 2000

**Your Ref:**

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### **COPPERGATE RIVERSIDE – Environment and Conservation comments**

Please find below a synopsis of our comments on the above scheme.

I understand that you have already received comments from our landscape architect, Miriam Addy, and that these have been passed on to Landscape Design Associates. As yet we have received no feedback. Separate comments on archaeology have been sent to yourself. John Oxley is in continuing discussion with Waterman Environmental.

#### **Urban and Architectural Consultation**

The urban framework of the new scheme addresses many of the concerns raised by the previous project and remedies some of the problems of the existing environment such as lack of linkage across the River Foss and the intrusion onto the skyline of Ryedale House.

Our main concerns relate to the quality of the architecture of buildings creating the setting for Clifford's Tower/York Castle buildings and the lack of amenity space for such an extensively developed footprint. The thrust of the scheme is still single use (contrary to imperative 9 in the reasons for refusal). This has seriously compromised the architecture making it difficult to achieve meaningful expression and an appropriate grain, particularly in the Castlegate area.

Please note the following detailed comments:

#### **Castlegate:-**

The gentle curve of the building line is a successful device in response to the sinuous nature of Castlegate and the form of the base of the mound

Unit 10 is unhappily juxtaposed with the female prison. The "jump" forward of the building line does not respect the public importance of this building and it obliterates its existence on approach from Castlegate. The original intention of creating enclosure for this building grouping (Esher 1968) is not achieved.

The increase in height of the residential component of the longer building on Castlegate makes the building look top heavy. This quality is exaggerated by the overhang which is too pronounced.

The Castlegate elevations are ponderous and too big in scale over their entire length. Some variety of interest and meaning must be developed within a single strong backdrop. Proposed uses hold little potential to offer an adequate architectural response.

The increase in height of the wall containing the service bays gives significance to elements which should be played down.

The location of service bays in front of Clifford's Tower is unfortunate. However the amplification of their significance by the introduction of a public space here is highly inappropriate and possibly dangerous. The design of this space detracts from the strength of the form of the extended base of the mound.

The grass base of the mound is not available to the general public (see Architects' statement). For the anticipated increase in footfall there is no additional amenity space on this side of the development. There is a concern that the riverside will draw-off potential visitors to the museum complex.

Landscape treatment is weak and does not respond to the architecture. Tree planting is neither formal or informal. It affects the setting of the Tower and divides the space. A concept should be developed which relates the spaces and strengthens the civic and historic qualities of this area.

### **Piccadilly :-**

The street environment appears to be improved generally and we particularly welcome tree planting.

The use of the street as a major set-down point for public transport requires greater attention to the permeability of the blocks. Visual interest and physical access must be improved on the Piccadilly frontage.

The view of Clifford's Tower from Mill Street has been blocked.

The design of the "prow" building should have a much stronger relationship to its special location.

The glazed central section of the bridge contrasts too baldly with the strong piers. This is a potential place of advantage (Cullen) and its design should allow people to feel comfortable in stopping here.

## **Coppergate, St Mary's Square**

More details of proposals are required to enable adequate comments to be made.

The space is well used' and static and dynamic area work well at present. The glazed canopy unifies the area and successfully brings the scale down. These qualities must not be lost in the proposed changes.

## **River Foss**

- At the same time as this space has been opened up as an attractive walkway it has been closed off as a potential riverside leisure area relating to existing visitor facilities on Castlegate. W-E links require careful development to ensure healthy cross-flow of pedestrians between existing spaces and the riverside.
- The link between St Mary's and Castlegate under the trees adjacent to Café Andros appears to have been partially closed by the insertion of steps and a boundary wall. The importance of York's unique historic attractions must not be diminished by deferential treatment towards the commercial aspects of the scheme.
- The river corridor is too hard in its landscape treatment and in the extent of glazing on riverside elevations. It should be developed at a linear urban greenway. Riverside trees should be planted such that they achieve a height visible from Clifford's Tower. Current proposals are entirely inadequate.

## **General**

We acknowledge the requirement in the City for larger open spaces for retail use but we are extremely concerned that the extent of the retail component of this one scheme will have a detrimental affect on the life of the City Centre.

Environment and Conservation