

# Conservation and Heritage Advisory Committee

## Pre-application Advice – Site on Full Street / Cathedral Green

Heritage statement / Cathedral 1 Full Street pre-application document –

### Summary overview of comments: -

The very disparate comments from members of CHAC in relation to the proposal for No1 Cathedral Green are perhaps a reflection that the scheme in its current form presents a concept and design that is insufficiently developed to afford any cohesive view.

It is acknowledged that the site is extremely important in terms of its location just outside the City Centre Conservation Area, relationship to the listed buildings nearby including the grade I Cathedral, the grade II former Silk Mill, the setting of The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) and the River Derwent, moreover the backcloth that pulls all of these elements together is the open space of Cathedral Green. This important design consideration would appear to have been seriously underplayed in the scheme being presented. This is a missed opportunity and should form an essential part of any design. The Developer has suggested that there is “enhanced public realm”, but in this regard it is hard to understand how this is realised within the scheme.

Whilst the development site is deemed outside the context of the City Council’s emerging brief for the Cultural Quarter it is likely that the terms of any redevelopment will potentially further emphasise the importance of Cathedral Green within the City.

General concern has also been expressed in terms of the scale and height of the development which it is felt do not respond favourably to the existing hierarchy established by the Cathedral and Silk Mill towers. The dominance of the nine storeys and the solid industrial nature of the building overwhelms the wider context and severely diminishes the importance of both buildings within the cityscape.

*Please note presentation different to what was sent out initially, but latest version has been sent out to everyone.*

### Individual comments made: -

Members had differing views on the proposal. The following bullet points record these: -

1. One stated that there was a lot of detail. Clear serious/quality appearance. Tower ok on Full St but elevation from cathedral green not succeeding – it is a block. They wondered about a step forward. Does not look visually appropriate. Narrower tower rather than a block. Proportions to glazing within block. One extra floor too much. Ok look if flood defence. Balconies ok. Brickwork details etc
2. Positive detailing but don’t like the tower opposite to the cathedral needs to be secondary to cathedral and less dominant. Too tall in terms of scale. Suggest same height as hotel? Overstated.
3. Too tall. It is a different elevation to the one approved. Suggest stone dressing to elevation? Positive comments on cornice and wondered whether could be heavier visually? Landscaping positive to incorporate flood defence. Suggest reducing height a little – add another tower to riverside edge adjacent to existing residential.
4. 9 storeys too high. Doesn’t enhance Conservation Area or nearby listed buildings such as the Cathedral/Former Silk mill. Does not enhance cathedral green. That it’s a tall building.
5. Thought there was an opportunity for breakout spaces onto the green. Suggest more views out of building to the river and onto the green and from corridor. Full street elevation ok but not appropriate to other elevation. Likes brickwork detailing in terms of cornice detail. Set roof further in recess visually. Perforation at ground floor level. More openness at

ground floor. Increase rustication base/ change language possible material change to bottom two floors. Cultural heart – could it be premature?

6. Heritage Statement has some useful background info and historical images but doesn't properly assess impact on key heritage assets.
7. Ref made to previous consent for 6 storeys. This at 9, appears too tall and overbearing, with little in the way of justification for its scale/mass, etc.
8. Limited architectural expression serves to heighten its impact/relentless rhythm.
9. Not convinced this will enhance setting of Silk Mill, Cathedral and Cathedral Green
10. Long, relentless internal corridors with no relief/views out
11. Corner tower on Full St looks very heavy and impenetrable.
12. Area of 'enhanced public realm' as described, offers little to the public.
13. Comparison (supposedly showing how pre-app comments have been addressed) shows very little appetite/desire to change anything?
14. Problem here is poorly conceived schemes which are too big & incongruous (rightly called out by CHAC), e.g., Becketwell, are now being used as precedent for what should follow.
15. I would like to emphasise the scheme needs to make more of the interaction between the river and Cathedral Green, currently it presents a fairly impenetrable face to both.
16. Oppose the plans proposed. The proposal makes much of previous (approved) applications but omits to note that they were all significantly less tall than the 9 substantial storeys proposed here. Also, our committee opposed at least one of them but were ignored. Furthermore, at least two earlier proposals for a site south of the Cathedral (now the car park) were objected to and refused as completely unsuitable in juxtaposition with the Cathedral. It also fails to take into account the renewed emphasis on setting (1990 Act section 66(1) particularly) emphasised by the Sevenoaks judgement and others, subsequently. Feel that at nine storeys (and exceedingly formulaic ones at that) it would irreversibly harm the setting of the conservation area and especially the grade I listed Cathedral and most views of it, not to mention the historic Silk Mill (LGI) and its gate (LGI), The College (LGI) and other listed buildings in the immediate purlieu of the Cathedral. We also think the submission rather stretches the recommendations of the Tall Buildings Policy, this being exactly the type of opportunistic over-tall development we had in mind when we originally framed it with the URC in 2008. Nor convinced by the remarks made vis-a-vis the DVMWHS buffer zone, especially in the light of the very trenchant comments (essentially a threat!) made to the Secretary of State by ICOMOS made in response to the grant of consent to the phoenix Street 'Landmark' tower. If we go on like this, we'll end up like Liverpool and have the WHS status rescinded!
17. I agree with many of the other comments as to the proposal being too tall, too massive and the proposed tower a direct challenge to the majesty of the Cathedral. Why do we need a building on this site at all? The Council's own strategy for the future of the city centre is to increase the amount of green space. This would present an idea opportunity to incorporate this site into Cathedral Green. In the 10 years or so that it has been vacant, the site has attracted much wildlife and those habitats would be lost.
18. Important to mention the setting of the WHS. It is at least as important as all the other heritage assets, and, I would argue, probably more so.
19. The Heritage Statement needs a total rewrite. To take section 6, the glib archaeological section. It is simply not sufficient to provide a rehashed version of the County Archaeologist's comments. Of the two applications refs. given, one is of a totally different proposal in a totally different part of the city, and the other the DCC website fails to provide all the necessary documents. We need to see all the archaeological documents. Was there merely a Desk Based Assessment of the archaeological implications, or was there any trial trenching? This statement provides no clue of what archaeological work took place.