



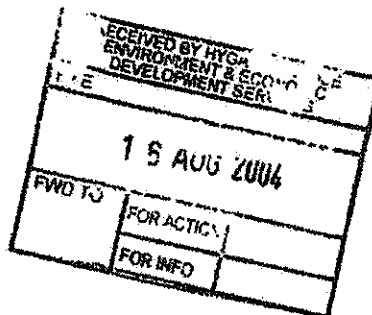
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Mr M R Robinson
Environment & Economic Development Services
Stockport MBC
Hygarth House
103 Wellington Road South
STOCKPORT
SK1 3TT

Your Ref.
Our Ref: pd/vj/marp1



13 August 2004

Dear Mr Robinson

Application No: DC016247, Church Street Garage, Marple

I write in response to your letter of the 22 July 2004, inviting comment on the above outline application for residential development. I therefore set out below British Waterways' (BW's) observations based on the information provided to us and our knowledge of the site.

The Church Street Garage is situated adjacent to the Macclesfield Canal, close to its junction with the Peak Forest Canal. The Canal is designated as a Conservation Area, recognising its considerable environmental and heritage value. It is also adjacent to the Marple Yard complex of Canal buildings, comprising two listed canal cottages, the listed boathouse and associated outbuildings. It is also adjacent to a listed canal bridge. The Church Street Garage is therefore located in a sensitive area in environmental and heritage terms and any development on the site needs to be mindful of this setting.

The Canal is also designated as a "Strategic Recreation Route" within the current UDP. Indeed, the Canal at this point forms part of the Cheshire Ring, making it attractive to recreational visitors, both land and water borne. The Garage site therefore is therefore highly prominent to a large number of visitors and it is important that any development on the site does not prejudice the high quality corridor to which the UDP aspires. Likewise, the Garage site offers a unique opportunity to provide a local landmark and identity for the whole of this Canal side area between Lockside and Church Lane, from Church Lane. The site is significantly below the level of the road at this point and redevelopment should seek to optimise the opportunities this could offer.

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Property Development - North
British Waterways Navigation Road Northwich Cheshire CW8 1BH
T 01806 723800 F 01806 723908
www.britishwaterways.co.uk



The garage site currently comprises a low grade workshop building which fails to make optimum use of the site and is not aesthetically attractive. The adjacent BW site is also in need of improvement and we are currently looking at options for this. The overall impact of the two sites would be significantly improved if the two were approached holistically.

Recognising this need for improvement and redevelopment, BW is, in principle, supportive of redevelopment for residential purposes on the Garage site. However, we would wish to see more detail provided on the proposed scheme to enable us to comment fully. We recognise that the application is only in outline and that all matters, except means of access, have been reserved for future determination. However, given the sensitivity of this site and its location, it is extremely difficult to make constructive comment without at least an indication of housing type, scale, design strategy etc..

Accepting that the application is only in outline, it may prove useful for the future of the scheme if I set out a number of initial observations based on the very limited information provided.

The following documents are all key to the design of successful waterside schemes and set out the basic principles which BW would seek from any scheme such as that proposed on the garage site.

British Waterways, *"Waterways and Development Plans"*, February 2003
IWAAC, *"Planning an Future for Inland Waterways: a Good Practice Guide"*, 2001.
DETR, *"Waterways for Tomorrow"*, June 2000.

BW would wish to see that any fully designed scheme made reference to the principles laid out in these documents.

These documents all emphasise the need to integrate waterspace into adjacent development, not only adding financial value, but environmental and heritage value. The waterway should not be seen simply as a visual backdrop or setting to development but as an important integral and functional space. The design approaches of the past have led to development turning its back on the waterspace, creating low quality environments and dead space. On this basis, had the current application been seeking approval for siting BW would have objected on the grounds of "dead" garden space, bin storage, car parking and an inaccessible landscaping area all fronting the important Canal Corridor and Conservation Area. We would also have objected to car parking of this scale located adjacent to a unique listed bridge structure.

In addition, BW would also comment that the single block of car parking is inappropriate in this waterside location where it would be detrimental to the environment of the waterspace. It also fails to optimise any opportunity for creating a "landmark" for the site from Church Lane, as the site is significantly below the level of the road at this point.

BW would seek a scheme which more fully addressed the waterway, rather than isolating development from it with ancillary uses, in accordance with the principles in the documents identified above.

Apart from these design related issues, BW would also comment that the maintenance of the waterway wall this point is the responsibility of the land owner and BW engineers would need to be satisfied that any development will not prejudice the integrity of that wall prior to any works starting. The land owner/developer would also need to notify BW prior to the commencement of works as he will be carrying out demolition, construction and operating machinery alongside BW property and water.

I trust that the above commentary is of use to yourselves and the applicants and we would be pleased to discuss any of the points raised above with you. So, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or require any further information.

Yours sincerely



VICTORIA A JOHNSON, M.Sc.(Dist.), MRICS
DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING SURVEYOR
Direct dial: 01608 723853
E:mail victoria.johnson@britishwaterways.co.uk