

*Sheffield Conservation Advisory Group*

SHEFFIELD RETAIL QUARTER

Observations on the outline planning application

1. SCAG considered the proposals for the Sheffield Retail Quarter at a special meeting on 29 September 2015.
2. The question that the Group has considered is whether the scheme would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, in which much of the scheme lies, and its impact on listed buildings in, and immediately adjacent to, the area, one of which is Grade I (Town Hall).
3. The Group considers that the proposals are an improvement on the previous schemes produced by Hammersons, although has reservations about aspects of the scheme as it currently appears. These are set out below. The Group is also conscious that the success of the scheme will depend in large measure on the detailed realisation of the individual blocks. But they take the view that it is essential that the overall form and massing of the development is subject to critical analysis at this stage, given that an outline permission will constrain the way in which the scheme can be integrated into the fabric of the city.
4. The Group's major concern is about the views of the development from key locations within the city centre and the relationship of new buildings to their immediate surroundings. The scheme proposals make much play of the view along Fargate and the proposed New Fargate from Marks & Spencers store to the new anchor department store to the north of the present Charter Square. The Group expressed concern over the views from the Peace Gardens and the Town Hall steps and the way in which the proposed height of buildings would dominate the frontages in Pinstone Street, including Town Hall Chambers.
5. A second major area of concern is with Cambridge Street. Apart from containing two listed buildings (Leah's Yard and the Sunday School), Cambridge Street has major historic significance in being until the nineteenth century a major turnpike route out of the city. It also retains the industrial character of the Devonshire Quarter and thus forms an important link between the city centre and its immediate surroundings. The Group considers that the proposals as they stand would result in a significant deterioration of the townscape of this part of the Conservation Area.
6. In addition to these general comments the Group has made the following observations about individual blocks:
  - *Blocks A & C* The Group strongly objects to the way in which the proposed new blocks would dominate the skyline above Palatine Chambers when viewed from Fargate, the Town Hall and the Peace Gardens.
  - *Block B* The Group considers the scale and massing of this block are appropriate for Barkers Pool, provided that the façade is in stone to reflect the stone frontages of the City Hall and the former Sheffield Waterworks Co. Building.
  - *Blocks D & F* The Group welcomes the proposed treatment of Leah's Yard. However, Leah's Yard was not designed to be seen in isolation and the Group is strongly of the

view that as much of the frontage of Cambridge Street should be retained in order to maintain the context within which Leah's Yard is located. In particular, the Group opposes the demolition of the former Sportsman pub, whose scale and form is sympathetic to the historic character of Cambridge Street.

- *Block E* The Group strongly opposes the treatment suggested for the Sunday School in Cambridge Street, which would effectively leave little more than a façade on Cambridge Street, dominated by the bulk of new buildings looming over it. The Group is also opposed to the demolition of 34 Cambridge Street, which would erode the character of the street.
- *Block G* The Group welcomes the retention of the “pepperpot” building on the corner of Pinstone Street and Charles Street but are concerned about the scale and massing of new buildings proposed that would adjoin them. The Group also welcomes the retention of the listed Citadel Building in Cross Burgess Street.
- *Blocks M & N* the Group felt concern at the way in which the development proposals would dominate the listed Aberdeen Works building. The Group recommended that the rooftop car should be lower or consideration should be given to the provision of residential accommodation on the roof, with basement car parking.