

Comments for Planning Application 25/00270/FULMAJ

Application Summary

Application Number: 25/00270/FULMAJ

Address: Custom House 20 Lower Thames Street & River Wall, Stairs And Crane Custom House Quay London EC3R 6EE

Proposal: Works to the Custom House and its immediate environs, comprising: |cr|Change of use of existing building and riverside car park from office (Use Class Eg(i)) to a hotel-led mixed-use building comprising the following components: 1. Hotel (Use Class C1); 2. Basement spa and health centre (Use Class E(d)); and 3. Ground floor food and beverage, public north/south route, gallery and events spaces (Sui Generis). |cr|Together with the alteration, extension, and refurbishment works to the interior and exterior of all three (Western, Central and Eastern) wings of Custom House, to facilitate the redevelopment of the existing building. Introduction of new mechanical/electrical/plumbing services throughout the building to facilitate the proposed use and provision of associated rooftop plant enclosures. The implementation of a public realm scheme to the existing quayside including replacement of southern ground floor external stairs to the Central wing, introduction of a new river terrace including stairs and step free access, new steps and ramp to the site's south-western boundary, revised flood wall and removal of existing vehicle ramp and replacement with vehicle lift. The provision of a site-wide landscaping scheme as well as works to the river wall, works to the flood defence walls, works to the western boundary wall and external works to facilitate servicing, vehicular drop off, cycle and disabled parking and all associated works.|cr|RE-CONSULTATION DUE TO THE SUBMISSION OF REVISED PLANS.

Case Officer: Georgia McBirney

Customer Details

Name: Dr Mark Dennis

Address: 12 Prospect Row Gillingham

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Other

Comment: The level of consultation for this application is exemplary. This is reflected in the very different and supportive responses to this application.

The current proposal gives a financially and ecologically sustainable commercial future for the building. This will encourage ongoing good maintenance alongside enhanced interpretation and development in the high-end hotel spaces proposed. It is the opposite of the previous proposal by other owners as it not only respects the structure of the building but shows an understanding of how it can support this future. The use of the arrest and restraint area in the basement as a future swimming pool is an indicator of an innovative and sensitive approach.

The proposal embeds the form, function and history of the building into the proposals unlike other suggested heritage based developments which would have erased the building's history (An example of that sterile approach is by Save Britain's Heritage [https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/docs/articles/2003_SAVE_CUSTOM_HOUSE_\(6\).pdf](https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/docs/articles/2003_SAVE_CUSTOM_HOUSE_(6).pdf).) This current planning application is not ashamed of the building's past, rather it seeks to use it to create a way of integrating the structure with the urban landscape and to create a unique environment for visitors and public to engage with this hidden history.

Finally, as a historian of HM Customs & Excise and Curator 1987-91 of the first publicly accessible museum of the Department (situated in the building) and later serving officer on the management team 1995-97 I am acutely aware of how important the building is in the wider history of public buildings, trade and taxation.

The Millennium String of Pearls opening and participation in London Open House reinforced the interest that the public have in the building once they are aware of its significance. The opening of the quayside will cement its relevance to the City and be an important link in the Thames Path restoring public access to the riverfront for the first time in a century.