

**ADDENDUM REPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**September 2012**

**Item: 7.4 and 7.5**

**Site: Officers' Walled Garden, Royal William Yard, Plymouth**

**Ref: I2/00868/FUL and I2/00869/LBC**

**Applicant: Mr Adam Willets (Urban Splash)**

**Page: 73-90 and 91-98**

**Correction:** - The Royal William Yard buildings date from the nineteenth century, not eighteenth, as stated in the conclusion.

**English Heritage (Additional comments):-**

1. We appreciate that inter-related matters across the site are now reaching a stage where decisions by the Council may have to be made despite the sense of impasse due to information requirements which exists, outstanding issues associated with previous consents, and concerns over compliance with the planning system. We also appreciate that on-site issues may be generating off-site problems for the local community and that there is a wider planning agenda which may be prompting an imperative for some kind of resolution to the parking situation overall. While our position on issues of concern to us remains as per our previous correspondence we are happy to see where there may be room for manoeuvre without compromising the integrity of that position or the significance of the site and its protection.
2. We remain concerned that the current parking proposals have been formulated in the absence of a longer term parking and access strategy, especially as it exists as a conditional requirement of an earlier consent and there appears to have been sufficient time to prepare this. While we recognise the difficulties and exigencies of the current market situation and the benefits which arise from capitalising on opportunities to repair and bring into sustainable operation discrete buildings on an ad hoc basis, this also generates tensions when attempting to weigh up strategic need and benefit against localised harm.
3. There can be no doubt that the creation of parking in the area proposed will cause localised harm to the significance of the site as a nationally important heritage asset, transforming this particular area's recreational and domestic character. We have previously indicated that the principle is (reluctantly) accepted on the basis that it can be assessed within the context of a definitive and final solution for on-site parking provision. Such an exercise relies on having a clear idea of the number of spaces required for the site in total irrespective of where they might go so the options for their accommodation can be holistically evaluated, wider benefits demonstrated, harmful impact minimised and appropriate mitigation measures identified. From our telephone conversation it appears that the uncertainty over future uses for remaining buildings means that we still do not have a final definitive figure for space requirements, with the only certainty being that number now sought in the current applications.

4. We understand the practical and political difficulties associated with bringing the Devil's Point car park into the equation and the technical issues associated with exploring the reservoir. Nonetheless, these sites - and other options - should be the subject of a full evaluation review so that their potential and feasibility of use - or not as the case may be - can be determined definitively. The outcome may of course conclude that the area proposed within the current applications must be seen as something of a practical inevitability in all scenarios, if even only for the short or medium term. For the present, the site may arguably present the only clearly deliverable option capable of addressing current tensions across in the site and that this provision and the works associated with it remain potentially reversible is an important consideration.
5. We have looked again at the design information submitted with the application in order to try to gauge in detailed terms where further information might be helpful and changes desirable. Certainly the removal of the 11 new spaces referred to in our letter of 28th June is welcome, and our conversation also touched upon surface treatments for the 37 overflow spaces, the extended access to the gardens, aisles and spaces within. Gradients and PSV considerations are clearly relevant, although car movement characteristics in what is a car-park will be slower than typical streets and we assume the affected area will remain unadopted. There is therefore need and hopefully some scope for flexibility in the approach to surface treatment to allow for a simple concept or regime sensitive to its landscape, rather than conventional urban, context. Hoggin may indeed be inappropriate for much-trafficked areas and tarmac is unduly urban. A rolled and bonded aggregate may offer a solution, for example.
6. It remains difficult from the drawings to endorse full details of the proposals and previously expressed concerns remain extant. While the significance of the site prompts careful consideration and agreeing as much design information as possible up front, you indicated that despite this much of the detailing of both applications will need to be confirmed and agreed through conditions to any consents. In which case, notwithstanding outstanding concerns, it may make sense to explore how much of this agenda is suitable for fine-tuning at that time. Landscaping treatments will need to be agreed along with specifications for interventions to historic fabric. We assume any appropriate archaeological measures have already been identified.
7. Details of signage (and lighting?) appear to still be in need of agreement. Some form of discreet signage near the Guardhouse may be sufficient, beyond which, having turned left, the route to the parking is self-evident and further provision should be unnecessary. We have also previously touched upon the matter of yellow lines, and the single access nature of the site and its atypical character may lend weight to a management regime where parking rather than "no parking" areas are identified. Information could be made visible on entering the site, thus precluding the need for further signage elsewhere within it.
8. That Urban Splash may finally be about to commission a transport strategy is clearly good news, though having to consider attaching its requirement as a condition to a second consent to reinforce such need is, to say the

least, disappointing. While the need for reasonableness to ensure the site moves forward positively and consensually is implicit, to be effective this needs to be recognised by all involved, underpinned by the role of the statutory planning process, and based on mutual understanding, collaboration and efficient communication. It would appear that the site is now achieving a critical mass of occupation and direction of operational travel to be able to begin to plan once more for its overall future. It would therefore be useful to agree the scope of the transport strategy exercise and the basis for our respective involvements in its production, along with more sophisticated management and project management measures for the site generally.

**The points raised by English Heritage have been anticipated and are considered in the report/ conditions**

**Recommendation: - Grant conditionally subject to Conditions**