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Dear Kishore

LIVERPOOL – MARITIME MERCANTILE CITY (UNITED KINGDOM) (C 1150)

In accordance with Decision 36 COM 7B.93 of the 36th session of the World Heritage Committee, I am pleased to send you a State of Conservation Report for Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City for consideration by the Committee at its 37th Session in June this year.

This report is structured according to the format provided by the World Heritage Centre as far as is possible.

1 Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision

It is not possible to provide a full reply to the questions posed in the recommended format as it is not yet known whether the possible planning consent for the Liverpool Waters scheme, which caused the property to be placed on the World Heritage in Danger List, will be confirmed. As you will recall, we reported in the spring that the Liverpool City Council are minded to grant consent for the Liverpool Waters scheme. This is a formal decision on their part, but one that has to be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as a result of English Heritage's objection to the scheme and because of the scale of the proposed development.

The Secretary of State, once he has considered the proposal, can decide not to intervene, in which case the City Council could then confirm consent and the scheme could proceed. Alternatively, he can decide that he wishes to take the decision himself, at the national level, in which case there will first be a public

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inquiry held by a planning inspector. Holding and reporting on the inquiry could take up to a year. The inspector would then recommend to him whether or not the scheme should be granted consent and the Secretary of State would then take his decision, based on the inspector's report. He does not, of course, have to accept the inspector's recommendation.

In the event, because of ongoing discussions between the developer and the City Council, the application was only referred to the Secretary of State in October 2012. His decision on whether or not to call in the case has not yet been taken. Until that happens, it is not possible to move forward on this case since the scenarios resulting from his decision are very different. Should he decide not to call in the application, the consent which Liverpool City Council are minded to grant would be confirmed by them. A public inquiry, should that be his choice, could lead either to the application being turned down, or to consent being granted, possibly subject to conditions or to a minor modification of the application. Any substantial modification would likely require a new planning application to the City Council rather than being determined by the Secretary of State, although that could then be called in. Until it is known which of these alternatives will happen, there is little that can be done.

Peel Holdings have advised us that in the event of planning permission being refused for the current application, an option available to them is to abandon their attempts to regenerate this under-used and derelict land altogether and continue with current uses or those that do not require consent.

I apologise that I am not able to provide more definite news at this stage. I will let you know as soon as the Secretary of State has made his decision.

2. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party

We are not aware of any other significant current conservation issues not previously notified or considered by the 2011 Mission.

3 In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, please describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone and/or corridors) that might be envisaged.

We are pleased to report that this year will see the re-opening of Liverpool's

Central Library and Archive after a major three year, £50m restoration and re-building scheme. The Central Library is of course one of the major historic civic buildings in the World Heritage property. The project involved the construction of a new state-of-the-art archive repository as part of improved facilities for the Public Record Office, improved facilities for the public display of the city's collection of rare books and documents, and the restoration of the Picton Reading Rooms (1879) modelled on the circular British Museum Reading Room of 1857. This is the welcomed return of a major civic cultural facility with much improved public services within the World Heritage Site as well as the restoration of an important attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

I trust that this report provides you with sufficient information for the moment and, as I said above, as soon as we know anything more I will send the information on to you.

You may wish to note that the Chair of the Liverpool World Heritage Site Steering Group, the City Council, and Peel Holdings, responsible for the Liverpool Waters scheme, have seen and commented on this report.

Yours sincerely



Francesca Conlon
Head of World Heritage

Cc Patricia Alberth, World Heritage Centre
H.E. Mr. Matthew Sudders, the Permanent Delegate of the United Kingdom to UNESCO
UK National Commission for UNESCO
Christopher Young, English Heritage

