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Dear Kishore

LIVERPOOL MARITIME MERCANTILE CITY (C1150)

In accordance with Decision 37 COM 7A.35 of the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee, I am submitting the state of conservation report for Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City. I have used the format stipulated as far as is possible.

1 **Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision 37 COM 7A.35**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-13/37.COM/7A,*
2. *Recalling Decision **36 COM 7B.93**, adopted at its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012),*
3. *Also recalling the results of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission of November 2011,*
4. *Notes the information provided by the State Party that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government decided not to call in the Liverpool Waters development for consideration at the national level, and that the Liverpool City Council had granted consent to the application submitted by the developer;*
5. *Reiterates its serious concern at the potential threat of the proposed Liverpool Waters development on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and also notes that the implementation of the development, as currently planned, would irreversibly damage the attributes and conditions of integrity that warranted inscription, and could lead to the potential deletion of the property from the World Heritage List;*

Part of the Liverpool Waters site lies in the World Heritage site, the remainder in the buffer zone. There has been a need for many years to find an appropriate form of sustainable development for



the 60 hectares of the derelict central docks involved in the Liverpool Waters scheme which is, at the same time, commercially viable. In common with some other large urban regeneration sites, there are tensions between securing much-needed beneficial development whilst ensuring that the historic environment will be protected and conserved.

As you will recall, the Liverpool Waters proposals are in outline form only at this stage and the planning approval is for a scheme to be built over a 30 year time scale in a series of phases. The permission is subject to a number of legal obligations and some 77 planning conditions. Together, these require, amongst other things, detailed master plans for each phase of the development prior to submitting any detailed proposals, protection and conservation of each and every heritage asset that falls within the development site, and a considerable amount of additional information in relation to any specific development proposals (including details of the layout, scale, appearance, access and landscaping). The Council's further approval of all these details is required before each part of the development can proceed.

Some elements of the proposals to which the World Heritage Committee objected are not likely to happen for many years so that the danger to which the Committee referred therefore remains a potential one which may not materialise. As yet, no detailed proposals have been made for implementation of any part of the outline planning consent and the controls on the permission outlined above have the potential to address other concerns expressed by the Committee. We shall continue to advise the World Heritage Centre on progress as detailed proposals are formulated for approval by the City Council.

6. Therefore, strongly urges the State Party to reconsider the proposed development to ensure the continued coherence of the architectural and town-planning attributes, and the continued safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property including the conditions of authenticity and integrity;

It is not possible in practice to reconsider the overall parameters of the scheme which has been granted outline planning permission. As noted above, the permission is subject to legal obligations and planning conditions that control all detailed aspects of the development alongside the protection and management of all heritage assets that fall within the development site. This provides the opportunity for both the Council and English Heritage to ensure sound conservation management and to seek modifications to the design in the context of, among other things, identifying, protecting, conserving and presenting the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. In the latter regard, design and conservation review bodies are being set up under the terms of the planning permission. Representation from English Heritage has been invited on these bodies and it will continue to work with the developer, Peel Holdings, and the City of Liverpool to promote development that sustains that Outstanding Universal Value.

7. Further notes that the State Party has not yet developed a proposal for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger and a set of corrective measures and requests the State Party to pursue its consultations with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to elaborate a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger along with a set of corrective measures, and a time frame for their implementation;

The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS proposed a Desired State of Conservation (DSOC) to the state party on 29th April 2013 as an initial first draft. At the side meeting during the World Heritage Committee between the state party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, it was agreed that English Heritage would discuss the draft with Liverpool City Council, Peel Holdings and the Chair of the Liverpool World Heritage Site Steering Group since it is essential to

achieve agreement from the key stakeholders on what can be achieved. Discussions are continuing between these bodies on an appropriate DSOC. We hope to send you a further draft shortly, reflecting those discussions.

8. Decides to retain Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) on the World Heritage List in Danger;

9. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2014, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014.

2. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party

We have reported previously on a number of significant achievements protecting, conserving and presenting the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site including dealing with buildings at risk in the World Heritage property. These demonstrate the effectiveness of the City Council and English Heritage in finding appropriate uses for disused buildings which are attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

The ongoing restoration and adaptive re-use of the North Warehouse at Stanley Dock is progressing well. The historic fabric of the building has been repaired and the internal conversion to a hotel will be complete for late Spring/ early Summer 2014. Consent has also been granted for the conversion of the adjoining 1950s rum warehouse into a conference and exhibition centre. This scheme is already progressing well on site and will be complete for Summer 2014 to greatly enhance the critical mass of activity at Stanley Dock. This should be the first phase of removing the whole Stanley Dock complex from the Heritage at Risk Register and ensuring the future of a major attribute of the World Heritage property.

We reported in our letter of 27th March 2013 that a scheme had been agreed to bring the Royal Insurance Building on Dale Street/North John Street back into use after many years when it has been vacant and at risk. The early 20th century Royal Insurance Building is one of the most impressive landmarks in what was the commercial core of the WHS. The conversion to a high quality hotel, supported by public and private investment, including funding from both the City Council and English Heritage, is progressing on site and repairs to the roof and external fabric are on schedule to be completed in early 2014. Once complete the scheme will allow the building to be removed from the Heritage At Risk register. The new hotel should open in autumn 2014.

Consent has now been granted for a scheme to convert Albion House, the former White Star Shipping Co office (listed at Grade II* and designed by Norman Shaw) into a hotel after many years of vacancy, and work is now in progress. The scheme has been designed to restore the impressive first class passenger lounge, one of the few internal features not to be destroyed by WWII bombing. Following pre-application discussions on the repair and the re-use of derelict shops on Dale Street, constructed in 1819 and one of the remaining fragments of C19th development within the Victorian and Edwardian townscape of the commercial core, a formal planning application has been submitted for the restoration, repair and re-use of the buildings with commercial office space on the ground floor and residential use on the upper floors..

The multi million pound restoration of the Library in William Brown Street has now been completed and the Library re-opened. This is one of the outstanding 19th century civic buildings in the cultural quarter of the WHS of Liverpool and its restoration is a significant contribution to the overall conservation of the World Heritage property and allows greater public understanding of it.

English Heritage has been reviewing the level of statutory protection of significant buildings in Liverpool and the significance of India Buildings has been recognised by upgrading its listing to II*.

The City Council is continuing with initiatives mentioned in previous correspondence. The first consultation on the Local Plan has begun and this will be progressed once comments are received. The new Local Plan should provide a strengthened framework for the protection and sustainable use of the World Heritage property. The Heritage Investment Framework is being updated so that the City's heritage priorities are recognized in funding bids and work programmes. Alongside this, the projects in the City Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework have been prioritized. Work will concentrate initially on the areas within the World Heritage property, including St George's plateau and the Strand.

Finally, the Mayor has commissioned a task force, led by David Fleming, Director of National Museums, Liverpool, and including representation from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, to prepare a report for him on the state and potential of the City's cultural heritage, including the World Heritage property, both in its own right and as a contributor to social cohesion and economic growth. That report has now been submitted to the Mayor for his consideration, and is another example of the priority being put on Liverpool's cultural heritage by the City Council. It is hoped that the Mayor may commission an integrated cultural heritage strategy within which the value and potential of the World Heritage property will be recognized.

Alongside these initiatives, the World Heritage Site Steering Group has been working with the City Council on the revision of the Management Plan and also a restructuring of the Group itself to strengthen community and private sector involvement. It is also hoped to create a wider Forum to increase involvement with the World Heritage property. The Steering Group and the City Council also hosted a high level seminar last summer which was aimed principally at businesses and decision takers in order to increase awareness and involvement with the World Heritage property. This seminar was opened by the Mayor and was chaired by Sir Neil Cossons, formerly Chair of English Heritage and Director of the Science Museum.

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.

The City Council have granted consent for a scheme to replace 86-90 Duke Street in the Ropewalks area of the World Heritage property. The existing buildings are a mix of eighteenth and nineteenth century residential, storage and industrial buildings. They all lie within the Duke Street Conservation Area. English Heritage recognized that a contextual redevelopment of this site was necessary but were concerned about the extent of demolition and the way in which the

new development would impose a new building form which would dominate the area and fail to respect the historic layering of the site. Following a request from English Heritage, the developer did produce a heritage impact assessment based on the ICOMOS guidance. This assessment recognized that the development would cause harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. English Heritage's advice to the City Council was that, while the harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area was substantial, the level of harm would be minimal in respect of the OUV of the World Heritage Site as a whole. They recommended that consent should be refused.

Beyond the southern boundary of the World Heritage property, but in its buffer zone, an application has been submitted for a new Exhibition Centre, just south of the Arena which was built some years ago, together with an adjoining hotel. Liverpool City Council and English Heritage have negotiated a reduction in height for the hotel which will ensure that there is no adverse impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. In addition, archaeological works will be undertaken in advance of construction to ensure that piling for the Exhibition Centre will minimise damage to in-situ archaeological remains, and that a programme of archaeological recording will be undertaken.

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 two drafts of this letter. All parties have reiterated their commitment to supporting the World Heritage property and maintaining its status.

The United Kingdom government remains fully committed to the principles of the World Heritage Convention and will ensure that it continues to do its utmost to meet its obligations under the Convention



Leila Al-Kazwini
Head of World Heritage

Cc HE Matthew Sudders, UK Permanent Delegate to UNESCO
UK National Commission for UNESCO
English Heritage

