

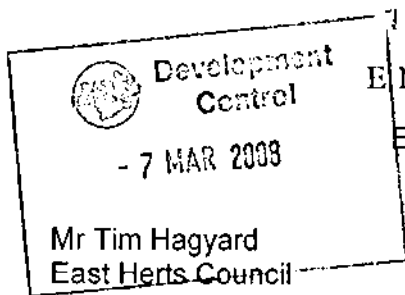
EHDC/6/C1

**Letter from English Heritage
dated 6 March 2008**

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Mr Tim Hagyard
East Herts Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
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Hertfordshire
SG13 8EQ

Direct Dial: 01223 582716
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Our ref: P00056830
6 March 2008

Dear Mr Hagyard

MCMULLAN'S BREWERY SITE, HARTHAM LANE, HERTFORD, EAST HERTFORDSHIRE, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG14 1QN

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001 & GDPO 1995
Application No 3/08/0098/FP/TH3/08/0099/LB/TH**

Thank you for your letter of 31 January 2008 notifying English Heritage of the above applications.

Sainsbury are proposing significant alterations to the northeastern area of the McMullen Hertford Brewery site. The main brewery buildings are listed grade II and are located north of the River Lea in the Hartham area of the Hertford Conservation Area. Sainsbury are proposing a large superstore on the north and east areas of the Brewery site whilst the Brewery retain their presence on the south and west and on to the river.

The main brewery buildings are cast iron frame and brick wall structures. Although the proposed new building would be attached at the east side of the east block, the proposed design would no longer be intrusive into the main building and does not seem to threaten the floor plates of the main structure.

The Conservation Area Character Statement emphasises the importance of the green areas, which are integral with the character of Hertford. This includes the river edges and commons and in particular the Hartford Common and the banks and setting of the River Lea. Hertford is an early historic town. Most of the thoroughfares and the roads predate most of the plots and buildings. Hartham Lane is one of the early thoroughfares. The River and its crossing locations should also be considered as early thoroughfares. The character of the thoroughfares and the adjacent plots and their building frontages define the character of the public spaces of the town. The landscape character is integral with the spatial character of the conservation area.



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The proposal would demolish some of the twentieth century industrial brewery buildings, in particular the lager building, which, although they contribute to the industrial character could not be considered to contribute to the historic building character. It would also demolish a small group of historic buildings on the southern side of Hartham Lane, within the brewery. These buildings have been neglected and although they were part of the 19th century evolution of the conservation area, they are now isolated and should be determined on their local importance and relevance. The proposed development would introduce a modern largely single storey supermarket building attached to the east side of the Brewery buildings, however a large part of the land would become car parking on both sides of Hartham Lane.

Although spatially the lane would be retained within the broader car park and forecourt circulation, it is not differentiated from the unrelated rectangular car park arrangement, even in surfacing materials, or by definition of the other side of the street, due to the proposed demolition of the historic buildings opposite. As Hartham Lane is an early route greater care should be taken to retain the continuity of its character.

The proposed geometric car park would also encroach on the banks and character of the River Lea. The nature of the landscape adjacent to or part of the composition of the River Lea or other spaces in the conservation area should not only not detract from its character but also enhance this important characteristic of the conservation area character. The car park area has the appearance of a standard supermarket car park. This is disappointing in this sensitive part of the conservation area. Consequently the layout, materials design and landscape should be reconsidered to be in character and link the adjacent parts of the conservation area. Much of this may be achieved by addressing the retention of the character of Hartham Lane and the reinforcement of the landscape and amenity of the bank of the River Lea.

The service area to the north of the proposed building, although screened by a wall would also benefit from the introduction of trees to provide a higher screen to the service area. The proposed supermarket building would now be attached to the listed former brewery by a glazed roof area. This relationship could be maximised to provide light and offer the texture and colour of the historic building materials to the design composition. However, care should be taken to retain the important elements of the historic building and creation of new openings and spaces, when creating the attachment of the large supermarket extension.

It is in this area of close proximity of the old and the new that the juxtaposition of modern and historic buildings and their design, scales and materials will be most clearly seen and appreciated. Although there would now be a higher dual-pitched roof structure on the northern façade, the northwest corner relationship does not



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seem to have been satisfactorily resolved. The overall impact of the proposed size, height and length would overpower the scale of the McMullen Brewery. There would also be expressed towers and a cranked panel in the outer wall, which should be reconsidered.

Due to the large size of the proposed primarily single volume building the height of the walls and the form of the roof would have a major impact on its character. Whilst the raised dual-pitched northern section would be helpful, it would seem beneficial to consider similar additions, which would be in sympathy with the adjacent listed building or along the long southern elevation.

The grade II listed former McMullen Brewery building complex would also have alterations made to the fabric of the building. Whilst in principle the proposal seems reasonable, care should be taken to retain the elements, which are part of the intrinsic or essential character of the historic brewery.

It seems that there are also matters, which may threaten the character of the access road as proposed traffic flows would threaten the capacity of the existing road junctions. The overall character of the existing streets, junctions and rear of pavement buildings are essential to the character of the conservation area, and alteration to any such areas should give careful consideration to the impact on the historic environment. It would be preferred if traffic solutions did not cause alteration to areas outside the curtilage of the application.

Recommendation

If the above considerations are taken into account then there would be no further objections to the approval of this proposal.

As there has been significant presence in the area for centuries if not millennia, there should be an appropriate archaeology conditions to overview record or preserve any significant archaeology, which would be affected by the proposed works.

Please contact me if we can be of further assistance. We would be grateful to receive a copy of the decision notice in due course. This will help us to monitor actions related to changes to historic places.



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Yours sincerely

Hilary Jameson

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