



CANAL HEAD KENDAL

Representations

GILKES

Revision 02 -12/08/09

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(N.B. This document should be read in conjunction with the
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8.1 Representations dated May 2008

1.0 THE CONTEXT FOR THE SUBMISSION

1.1 Signet Planning Limited has been instructed by Gilbert Gilkes and Gordon Limited for four years to assist in the planning related issues arising from the company's desire to have a new headquarters for its business in Kendal. The company operates from historic but dilapidated buildings in the Canal Head North part of the town and, for a considerable period, has been seeking to identify a site and a route through the planning process to enable a new manufacturing and office headquarters to be found within or adjacent to the town.

1.2 The company is one of the leading employers in Kendal and manufactures turbines for the hydroelectric power industry and also diesel engines for the marine industry. It is one of the leading companies in the hydroelectric power turbine industry in the world and traditionally has been based in Kendal since its inception in the 19th Century. It is recognised by all parties, including South Lakeland District Council, that the retention of Gilkes in Kendal is highly desirable, particularly given the manufacturing and traditional base of the company in the town and the fact that it is one of the leading companies in the world involved in the sustainable energy industry.

1.3 At the same time as Gilkes has sought to provide a new headquarters within Kendal, South Lakeland District Council has identified the area around the Canal Head site, including Gilkes' existing premises, as being part of a wider area where mixed-use regeneration should take place. As early as 2004, the Council commissioned consultants to carry out a study of the potential development options around the Canal Head area, based around the proposition that the line of the original Lancaster Canal should be reinstated and a new canal head be built in the area where historically one was located in Kendal within the site occupied by the Gilkes' factory.

1.4 Gilkes and its advisors have made representations at various stages of the Council's process in identifying the most appropriate redevelopment of the Canal Head area and how to deliver the aspiration of the new canal and canal head. It is fair to say that Gilkes and its advisors have a number of concerns about the direction in which the consultants' studies (prepared by Arup) were approaching the principle of a comprehensive development of the area – in particular how it could be delivered and how Gilkes itself, being a key and important landowner within the area, was being regarded in terms of its prominence within the regeneration area as a whole.

1.5 The latest study prepared by Arup on behalf of South Lakeland District Council identified (in April 2008) a number of options for the redevelopment of the area. Gilkes made representations dated May 2008 (see Appendix 1) which suggested that the basis for the regeneration of the Canal Head area should be completely reviewed and that the priority should be to promote a mixed-use scheme that would allow a canal head to be delivered; Gilkes to be provided with a new headquarters and enabling development to be allowed of a form and scale that would result in the area around the northern part of the canal head to be delivered from an economic point of view.

1.6 The conclusion of those representations was that the Council should consider a mixed-use development model in the northern part of the Canal Head area (the "Canal Head Regeneration Quarter"), based around a new convenience goods retail store assisting in the funding of a mixed-use residential and office development. This would allow for the provision of a new headquarters for Gilkes within the area and the reinstatement of the canal head.

1.7 At the time of the submission of the May 2008 letter (and after further discussions with Council officers) it was understood that the Council would be considering its draft submission document for the Kendal Canal Head area in July 2009. It is now understood that this date has been put back until November 2009. Whilst to some extent Gilkes was content to put forward its case through the evolution of the AAP, two main developments have resulted in it being sensible to provide the Council with these representations now, rather than later in the year.

1.8 Firstly, Gilkes has entered into discussions with adjacent landowners in the Canal Head North area including Mealbank Properties, Canal Head Properties and Kendal Ski Club. This has resulted in all the landowners in the northern part of the Canal Head area (excluding South Lakeland District Council and Cumbria County Council) agreeing to progress a comprehensive development on the combined area of their landholdings. The landowners concerned have also been approached by several national retailers who are co-operating with them in terms of the scale of retail development that may be provided on the combined site. The landowners' consortium, which is headed by Gilkes, has appointed a professional team to prepare a masterplan for the northern part of the Canal Head area, which is now called "Kendal's Regeneration Quarter – Canal Head" (Canal Head Regeneration Quarter). The professional team includes Plus Three Architecture (+3 Architecture) and Messrs Mouchel. The second reason why it is considered these representations should be submitted at this time is to provide the Council with information that it may make available to the public inquiry dealing with the refusal of planning permission for a new convenience goods store and a number of large format comparison goods units on the outskirts of Kendal on Shap Road. The public inquiry into the refusal (which relates also to the relocation of Kendal Rugby Club) is to be held in September and Gilkes and its land owning partners wish to underline to the Council

the deliverability and availability of what is a sequentially preferable site for a retail based regeneration project. It is important that the Council is aware of these more recent developments on the Canal Head Regeneration Quarter site, as it appears that the case being put forward by those representing the appellant on the Shap Road site is that the Canal Head North site is neither suitable nor available for retail uses. As set out in Section 6 of this document, that is not the case and there are implications therefore in terms of the interpretation of Government policy on retail developments in PPS6 that are important for the Council to make a public inquiry aware of.

1.9 Following on from these representations (as is explained in Section 7), it is the intention of Gilkes and its development partners to suggest that the Council adopts the masterplan for Canal Head Regeneration Quarter as part of its Action Area Plan in the short term. It is also the intention to prepare and submit a planning application based on the masterplan option that is currently being pursued (see Section 4) and associated masterplan document submitted with these representations. In this way, it is considered that whilst there remain technical work issues to be resolved, there has been considerable preparatory work done in terms of the development that could take place in Canal Head Regeneration Quarter and the co-operation between landowners would allow such development to be delivered. This is a major step forward, which the Council, in progressing its AAP, and indeed the Inspector who may consider the public inquiry into the Shap Road appeal, should take into account as a material planning consideration.