



FRIENDS OF EXETER SHIP CANAL

Britain's oldest pound-lock canal
Cruise, Walk, Enjoy

Affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association

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Zulema Nakata
Planning Officer
Planning Department
Exeter City Council

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Dear Ms Nakata

Unit 3 and 4 Maclaines Warehouse, Exeter Canal Basin
Application No: 19/1714/FUL (LB and CA)

The Friends of Exeter Ship Canal strongly oppose the above application on the grounds of the inappropriateness of the proposed use.

Unit 3 and 4 Maclaines Warehouse are the last unoccupied buildings on the Canal Basin, built to ensure the existence of the canal, that could be substantially returned to uses that would complement the waterway today. The application, if granted, will be the final closing off of the buildings from any meaningful use connected with Exeter's waterways as a whole – namely the Canal and Quayside.

That would be damaging and contrary to the interests of the planned and viable future of the Canal and Basin at a time when a Canal Management Plan is to be drawn up by Exeter City Council to manage and develop the potential of the waterway and associated land in keeping with the character and functionality of the area, and to meet successfully the changing economic requirements and challenges of waterway use.

Positive developments that would be set back by granting this application include the foreseeable benefit of improved navigation of the canal that will allow most boats unrestricted passage beneath the A379; much-needed provision of services for increased numbers of craft on the waterway and visiting Exeter; and the economic potential to the city of the Basin today to attract and grow new boat-related business to complement existing boat maintenance and storage activities that the council has committed to retain.

The facilities at the Basin were historically built as a destination and provision for the waterway and today's activities associated with the Canal still depend on what the Basin can provide. The Canal will require the facilities of an integral basin and buildings if it is to attract and cater for more visiting boats, more overall use, and boat maintenance, building and storage are to re-generated. Without the benefits and facilities of the Basin area, the canal remains a body without its head. The planning application under consideration would therefore damage the area's water related commercial, tourist, leisure and community life and potential.

The Friends of Exeter Ship Canal are an independent voluntary group in Exeter committed to conserving the Canal and maintaining it as an active waterway for everyone in the future.

We have expressed concern that the Canal and Basin are not regarded as a whole for strategic and planning purposes. We urge the city council, as owners of the waterway, and Exeter Canal and Quay Trust, as buildings landlords, to come together urgently, through the Canal Management Plan, to pull these fundamental matters together in order that the occupation and long-term roles of the buildings and land around the Basin can be brought into focus.

We believe the response to the current planning application will be emblematic for the future of Exeter's waterways and urge the planning committee to reject the present application for the change of use of Unit 3 and 4 of Maclaines Warehouse as inappropriate.

Yours sincerely

John Monks