



# Gary Craig Building Services Ltd.

Registered Office:  
10 Fulmar Walk  
Whitburn  
SR6 7BW

Tel: 01915294964

Email: [gcbltdgservices@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:gcbltdgservices@tiscali.co.uk)

31/8/15

Dear Mr. Simonette,

## UK DOCKS, RIVER DRIVE, SOUTH SHIELDS

With reference to the above I can confirm the following :-

The formal decision notice from the MMO has been provided, confirming that an EIA is not required.

## PLANNING CONSULTANT'S REPORT

Whilst we are sympathetic to and understand the concerns of the residents as expressed through their Consultant's report we would like to explain the Applicant's point of view.

On a technical point, the proposals are for the demolition of the existing single storey office block and workshop. The existing buildings will be replaced with a new 2 storey office block, workshop with winch house and an extension to the existing boat shed. An additional boat shed is proposed and a new jetty which will replace the existing jetty. The existing vehicular access is to be relocated.

The River Drive site has been a boat yard for its entire existence under UK Dock's control.

If the use of this site as a boat yard has intensified it is purely because the company has been successful in winning new boat repair contracts, including M.O.D. contracts which require the repairs to Naval boats to be carried out under cover.

## POTENTIAL NUISANCE

By building the sheds the applicants are seeking to provide the cover necessary to minimise noise, and contain any fumes or spray, etc. in recognition of the objectors concerns. The alternative would be for the work to be carried out in the boat yard where there are parts that are close to the residential properties.

There was never any guarantee that the boat repairs would remain "low key" and "sporadic" as stated in the Consultant's report.

The applicants are fitting canvas doors and insulation to the proposed shed so that any noise and spray can be contained.

A further noise barrier is proposed (as shown on Drawing No. 11, Rev A) at the boundary fence even though the power tools employed in the boat repairs are akin to domestic cutters and grinders.

The Planning Consultant states that the office buildings are of a "large scale", reaching "up to eye level as seen from Greens Place" but we do not consider that this is the case.

The offices are a normal 2-storey block with a low pitched roof.



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References are made to the portakabins that have been located on the site. These are temporary office/site cabins which simply demonstrate the need for a permanent and more aesthetically pleasing office base for the company.

All of the existing office and workshop accommodation has been provided on a portakabin and piecemeal metal clad shed basis and is the very reason why the applicant wants to improve the quality and appearance of buildings on the site.

The new buildings occupy the footprint of the existing buildings, as far as possible, and are located as far away as possible from the residential properties, not only to minimise their impact, but also to leave a considerable open gap looking through to the river, unlike all of the adjoining commercial and residential buildings on River Drive/Wapping Street - see attached photograph.

The photograph of the shed provided by the Planning Consultant was taken from an angle at the top of the steps on Greens Place when in fact the shed is largely obscured by tree cover at street level in Greens Place. Again in recognition of the objectors concerns, the new shed has been reduced in height by 3m so it will be below the tree line in Greens Place.

I attach a photograph of the actual impact of the shed which could only be seen from one location in a gap in the existing shrubbery near 85 Greens Place, and its grey colouring blends into the skyline.

#### LACK OF INFORMATION -

We do not consider that there is a lack of information in the application.

Full details have been provided particularly in relation to Highways Engineers, Public Health Officers, the Environment Agency, and Marine Management Organisation, and include Archaeological Assessment, Phase1 Preliminary Risk Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, jetty details and cross sections, etc.

A 3D image was sent out to the residents with the intention of making the residents aware in advance of what was proposed in simple terms, to attempt to be good neighbours.

#### PLANNING POLICY -

With regard to planning policy there are many elements of the National Planning Policy Framework that support the proposed development -

The general presumption in favour of sustainable development, the creation of jobs, supporting existing business, and replacing poor quality buildings with better buildings.

Paragraphs 122 and 123 specifically state that "Planning Authorities should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land, and the impact of the use, rather than the control of processes and emissions themselves where these are subject to approval under pollution regimes" and that decisions should aim to "recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established".

There are various elements of the Local Development Framework in terms of sustainability and energy efficiency, safeguarding employment, etc.

UK Docks have always been based in South Shields, they own the site, and their previous premises in the Port of Tyne has been deprived of access to the river as part of the Port redevelopment. It would not therefore make economic sense to now seek to buy or lease an alternative site.

Most of the South Shields Town Centre and Waterfront Area Action Plan refers to redevelopment of vacant land at Harton Staithes/Mill Dam which are specific regeneration areas in terms of the riverside. The Plan allows for mixed use and commercial development, but UK Docks is not a new use it is a use that was established before the housing development was created.



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The office use is ancillary to the B2 use, providing a headquarters for Engineers/Designers and Administrative staff to provide designs, materials, and parts for the boat repairs, as an example.

The office block, which will be the main feature visible from River Drive and is designed to a good standard using colours and materials that reflect its boat building history.

The remaining buildings at least create some uniformity of material and design to replace the existing 'mish-mash' of old metal cladding and portakabin accommodation, etc.

A further photograph is attached to illustrate how the existing boat shed is almost hidden by the existing single storey office when viewed from river Drive and will not be visible at all from this location when a 2 storey block is constructed.

It is not considered practical or sensible to create public access through a working boatyard.

No such access exists through the adjacent commercial properties in Wapping Street and it would be a potential health, safety, and security risk to allow public access.

### HISTORIC ASSETS -

With regard to the setting of the historic assets situated in proximity to the proposed development, National Planning Policy Guidance states that "substantial" harm has to be caused to the significance of a Heritage Asset, and it is a "high test", "so it may not arise in many cases, and it is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed".

Using this definition it is hard to imagine how the UK Docks development causes any harm to the significance of the Arbeia Roman Fort and the North Shields Fish Quay, nor does it affect a key element of the Listed buildings special Architectural/Historic interest.

It has no effect on the Arbeia Roman Fort, or the setting of Tynemouth Priory, and the North Shields Conservation Area boundary finishes in the middle of the River Tyne.

With regard to the Listed buildings in Greens Place the new shed may be visible from the upper floors of the listed properties in Greens Place, but we believe that it has been demonstrated that it is largely invisible at Greens Place street level, so it is not considered detrimental to the Architectural/Historic interest of the Listed houses, and as stated previously, the new shed will be reduced by 3m in height so it will be below the tree line in Greens Place.

UK Docks aims to propose to continue contributing to the heritage of the River Tyne and that it is in itself a developing asset.

The Tyne Slipway & Engineering Co. was purchased in 1995 by the current owner after lying dormant for the previous 4 years. The boat yard was purchased from Mr. Frankie Malloy who owned the boat repair yard from 1976, but prior to that we can demonstrate that the site has been part of the marine heritage of the Tyne as far back as, at least, 1855, (see attached map ), and one would assume that it probably goes back a lot further.

Since 1995, the site has continued to operate as a boat repair facility servicing vessels such as the Tyne ferries for Nexus, Port of Tyne pilot and survey vessels, local fishing vessels, commercial and leisure craft.

In addition, the company was awarded a contract from the MOD in July 2014 which is for the upkeep of a total of 116 vessels to maintain its fleet of small boats. UK Docks was one of six companies that benefited from the five year contract which involves providing maintenance support for a fleet of boats used by the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and MoD Police, including offshore raiding craft, pontoons up to 50 metres in length, police launches and Pacific 24 Ribs and inflatables, so it is a high profile contract which is currently being executed uneconomically from a variety of rented locations.

UK Docks control and manage this national contract from the River Drive site and provide maintenance, upkeep, repair, defect rectification, technical support and provision of spares for the West Coast vessels operating between Faslane Naval Base and Devonport Royal Dockyard and the entire P2000 Archer Class Vessels.



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The vessels in the main are hand painted using brushes and rollers, and when any spray painting is required the vessels are tented in and all fumes and spray emissions are contained.

This slipway is the only slipway left on the River Tyne and if the company cannot continue to operate, expand, and modernise the facility it would have no option other than to consider closing the site losing over 160 years of ship/boatbuilding heritage on the Tyne, or carry out the work externally, in front of the Harbour View housing, where current contracts are allowed.

The River Tyne could lose its only remaining boat yard and Nexus and the Port of Tyne, two major operators on the River would have no options for out of water repairs to their vessels.

In addition, the company employs around 15 people who all live local to the South Shields area, all of whom could lose their jobs as they would be left with no alternative other than to distribute the MOD contract work to the company's facilities in Gosport and Whitehaven.

#### OTHER ISSUES -

The UK Docks site cannot be considered to be a wildlife habitat so this is not considered to be an issue.

The Planning Consultant, on behalf of the residents requests that the development should "reduce levels of pollution, environmental risk, and nuisance" as this is exactly what the development achieves by containing the boat repair work within an enclosed, insulated space.

The complaints of noise which have been made to date relate largely to construction noise and operations that have been carried out before the enclosure of the shed has been completed.

Unfortunately construction noise cannot be entirely prevented, but it is short lived, and applies to any construction site near to a residential area. If no construction noise were to be permitted in a residential area nothing could ever be built.

As previously stated, many of the LDF 'requirements', and landscape character assessment, refer generally to the Riverside and the plans to redevelop the vacant land around it, but UK Docks is not a vacant site, it has an established use and established characteristics relating to its tradition of boat repair heritage at South Shields.

The applicants do not however have any objection to a Condition being attached to the Planning Permission requiring the provision of a limited amount of soft landscaping along the boundary with Harbour View (which already benefits from such landscaping and tree cover in the existing gardens).

I understand that the Harbour View residents are concerned that work such as the jetty construction is bringing the development closer to their homes, but the existing jetty is in relatively shallow water inside the site boundaries, so the new jetty will push the boat moorings out into deeper water away from the housing.

With regard to other points raised I can only reaffirm the following -

#### NOISE POLLUTION -

Every effort will be made to minimise construction noise.

We have now obtained a detailed piling methodology as follows -

The piling work would be carried out during the working week and would be undertaken from the eastern hard stand area above the jetty area, using a 100 tonne crawler crane. A noise abatement fence will be fixed alongside the adjacent properties in order to prevent the minimal crane noise disturbing the residential area. Once the crane working zone is secured, a temporary works installation would commence. The first activity will be the driving of 4 in no. dummy tubular piles. These piles will be used to hold the pre – fabricated piling gates and walkways. The spud pike will be lifted into position by means of a hydraulic vibrating piling tool. The pile is held in the jaws of the tool, lifted into position with the crane and vibrated into the river bed. There is minimal noise or vibration from the vibro tool. The 4 spud piles are driven to the outside corners of the array of the permanent pile positions. Once the spud



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piles have sufficient purchase into the river silt / clay, steel holding brackets will be welded onto the lower & higher sections of pile. These welding works will be accessed via a man riding basket attached to the crawler crane. Once secured, the first of the walkways will be attached. The walkways are fabricated out of 610 mm. 'H' beams, with handrails attached. The beams are welded onto the temporary piles and cross beams attached to negate any lateral movement. This activity will be repeated until there are walkways top and bottom, either side of the proposed pile line. The permanent tubular pile will be lifted into the piling frame by the crane using quick release shackles. Once in the gate the shackle will be released. The vibro driving tool will be attached to the pile, again by hydraulic jaws. The pile will then be gently vibrated through the silts and sands until there is sufficient resistance. There should be enough soil resistance in the area to allow a decent depth of vibro driving as the proposed contractor has previously carried out similar work in other parts of the Tyne. As is the norm in piling works the final meter or so of the piling is completed using an impact piling hammer. This is a drop hammer tool that has a bell attached that covers the top of the pile. This allows for safe level driving and baffles the sound of the hammer. The impact tool is lifted onto the pile and the pile is driven to a pre-determined amount of blows per 25mm. Although the dull noise of the driving can be heard in the vicinity of the area, there is little vibration felt. Once the pile is driven to "set" the operation will be repeated until all piles are installed. The piling gates will then be removed, again by use of a man riding basket. The temporary spud piles will then be extracted using the vibro tool in reverse, again there will be minimal noise or vibration during this activity.

#### OVERSHADOWING -

Please refer to overshadowing analysis that has been carried out by Royal Haskoning DHV who are an independent Civil and Structures Advisory Group.

#### HERITAGE ASSETS -

An assessment of the impact on adjacent Heritage Assets (and the Heritage Asset created by the UK Docks development) is already outlined above, as are comments on Planning Policy.

The information provided in the MMO EIA screening covers many of the objections and comments raised, including the fact that the proposals are not considered to have any adverse effect on wildlife/sea-life habitats, and do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The site was established 140 years or more before any residential properties existed.

Every effort has been made to take the home owners concerns into consideration by providing better buildings, better sound insulation, and an enclosed working environment, with the maximum separation possible within the confines of the site, and subject to the contractual requirements to be met by the company for clients such as the Ministry of Defence.

As UK Docks can no longer access the River from their previous location in the Port of Tyne they will be exercising their established right to conduct more business from the River Drive site. This can take place in the undeveloped open yard adjacent to the Harbour View houses, or within a purpose built, enclosed and insulated, building.

We believe that it is clear that granting Planning Permission, with appropriate Conditions and controls, will actually benefit the adjoining house holders rather than cause harm or nuisance.

I believe that you now have all of the information you require to take the application forward and I would be grateful if you would now commence the final consultations.

For all of the reasons stated above you are respectfully requested to recommend the development for Grant of Planning Permission.

Yours Sincerely,

Gary Craig



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**Remaining view of the Tyne and North Shields Fish Quay from River Drive**

View of existing boat shed from Greens Place



Comparative view of Harbour View Housing



**View of existing boat shed behind existing single storey offices**

Above: Select the required shipbuilder by using Initial letter of the surname eg: Armstrong, Palmer or Readhead.



The above map dated 1855 is approximately 0.7 miles in width

### Shipbuilders in the Lawe area of South Shields:

Name	Shipbuilder's Name	Town or District	Dates	Ships
Bulmer	<u>Richard Bulmer</u>	South Shields	1802 - 1844	11
Bushell	<u>Luke Blumer Bushell</u>	South Shields	1846 - 1858	10
Evans	<u>James Evans</u>	South Shields	1803 - 1815	2
Greenwell	<u>Greenwell Bros</u>	South Shields	1856 - 1860	3
Laing	<u>John &amp; Paul Laing</u>	South Shields	1813 - 1845	16
Marshall	<u>Thoms Dunn Marshall</u>	South Shields	1830 - 1861	65
Readhead	<u>John Readhead &amp; Co, Lawe Yard</u>	South Shields	1872 - 1881	83
Readhead	<u>Readhead, Softley &amp; Co</u>	South Shields	1865 - 1872	88
Rennoldson	<u>Charles Rennoldson</u>	South Shields	1914 - 1924	49
Rennoldson	<u>JP Rennoldson &amp; Sons</u>	South Shields	1872 - 1929	223
Softley	<u>Readhead, Softley &amp; Co</u>	South Shields	1865 - 1872	88
Softley	<u>John Softley &amp; Co</u>	South Shields	1873 - 1875	24
Softley	<u>John Softley &amp; Sons</u>	South Shields	1878 - 1880	5
Wallis	<u>Robert, Thomas &amp; John Wallis</u>	South Shields	1720 - 1869	5
Woodhouse	<u>Andrew Woodhouse</u>	South Shields	1837 - 1867	43
Wright	<u>Wright, Harle &amp; Co</u>	South Shields	1815 - 1816	2



**Typical piling frame**