## Key Issues –

The majority of the North Holmes campus falls within the Canterbury World Heritage Site which comprises three Grade I listed assets; Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine’s Abbey and St Martin’s Church as well as the Northgate conservation area. The former Canterbury Prison is itself Grade II listed. As a result the most significant issue in the EIA was Cultural Heritage, in terms of the impact of the proposed modifications on the listed prison buildings, the potential for archaeological remains and the potential impact upon the setting of the World Heritage Site.

In addition to the sensitive heritage assets the scheme also had the potential to be visible in the wider landscape necessitating a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Another key issue was the inclusion of the energy centre which required a detailed assessment of potential effects on local air quality given the proximity to residential development.

## Purpose of the project

BDP was commissioned by Canterbury Christ Church University in 2014 to prepare a masterplan for their North Holmes Campus. In 2016 the planning application for the Prison Quarter was submitted. The proposals are for a new student services hub, a heritage centre within the prison and adjacent engineering building, below ground car park and new public routes and spaces.

## Description of the project

Demolition of C Wing and part B Wing of the former prison, and the addition of three storey extension to the rear to provide a new c5000sqm Student Services Hub and ancillary café/restaurant; Retention and adaptation of A Wing to provide museum and academic space; Part demolition of existing gatehouse and prison wall; Demolition of existing back land buildings and erection of new five storey building to provide c20,000m2 teaching and learning space ; and Landscaping and the provision of a new public square and through route leading to St. Martin’s Church.
Lessons learnt

The Importance of early engagement regarding the WHS

BDP consulted extensively throughout the design process with the local community and heritage groups including The World Heritage Committee, The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Canterbury Archaeological Trust, Historic England and the City Council and gained their total support.

ICOMOS was identified as a key stakeholder at the outset of the masterplan project. A strategy for engaging ICOMOS and securing its buy-in to the Prison Quarter proposals was identified as a means of reducing planning risk. Newsletters providing updates on the progress of the design and timings for consultations were issued to ICOMOS in advance of site tour and presentation and discussion before the submission of the planning application. As a result of this engagement, ICOMOS supported the proposals and raised no objection to the planning application.

In addition to engaging ICOMOS, BDP led extensive pre-application consultation with the local authority. Aided by a pre-application Planning Performance Agreement, the applicant and design team met with Council officers on a fortnightly basis over the course of six months to discuss evolving designs and seek the views of officers from both the Council and Historic England.

Lessons learnt cont. -

The pre-application meetings took the form of interactive design workshops and were a forum in which officers and the design team exchanged thoughts and ideas about the emerging proposals. Through an iterative process, the designs took account of concerns raised, incorporated suggested changes and evolved to the scheme granted planning permission in December 2016.

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