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Hackney Gazette

December 16, 2010 Thursday

Shoreditch conservation area threatened by 24-storey office block

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COUNCIL chiefs have given the go-ahead to bulldoze "unique" Georgian buildings in a Shoreditch conservation area to pave the way for a 24-storey office block.

The government's statutory advisor on the historic environment, English Heritage raised the "strongest possible objections" to the One Crown Court development, in the Sun Street Conservation area at the planning meeting last Thursday. But councillors gave developer **Sun Street Properties'** application the green light, subject to a section 106 agreement, whereby in return for planning permission, a developer agrees to provide local infrastructure.

English Heritage is now considering whether to call in the decision to the secretary of State, who has the power to overturn the decision. Rachel Godden, senior historic buildings and area advisor for English Heritage, said: "These proposals would result in very substantial and unacceptable harm to the Sun Street Conservation Area, neither are we convinced that the claimed public benefits would come even close to outweighing that harm."

Kevin Moore of conservation organisation, the Hackney Society, also expressed concern at the planning meeting that the Sun Street Conservation Area was already the smallest conservation area in Shoreditch, and further erosion would mean it was not worth having.

Council planning officer Gillian Nicks said the terrace is: "a fairly unique survivor of a city terrace in the Shoreditch conservation area. However these buildings are very dilapidated and attempts to list them three times have been turned down."

Nigel Morley of **Sun Street Properties**, which is owned by financial services firm UBS, said: "The planning committee resolved to grant planning permission for the One Crown place scheme last week as Hackney Council recognises the significant benefits to the local area, which include substantial investment enabling the sustainable reuse of the majority of the Georgian terrace, as well as the regeneration of an underused site."

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