

PRESS RELEASE: SAVE PREPARES A NEW VISION WITH ARCHITECT HUW THOMAS FOR SILVER HILL, WINCHESTER

With the architect Huw Thomas SAVE is preparing a new vision for the Silver Hill site. In the 1990s SAVE and Mr Thomas drew up the present scheme for Peninsula Barracks and obtained planning permission for it and subsequently a developer willing to carry it out. This is widely considered one of the most successful developments in Winchester in recent years.

The SAVE scheme for the barracks followed on from SAVE's landmark exhibition 'Deserted Bastions', which looked at military enclaves falling into disuse.

The new scheme for Silver Hill follows on from SAVE's long involvement with Smithfield General Market in London where SAVE has worked with market specialists to demonstrate ways of reviving Victorian market buildings. In Winchester a new open and covered market is a major element of the SAVE scheme. The present entrance to the bus station in the High Street will become the main entrance to the site, inviting shoppers and visitors to explore both an open market and a covered market in the bus station.



The new vision is low rise with open space and trees, houses and shops

A second aspect of the proposals is to open the stream running through the site so it becomes a landscape feature providing attractive views for new housing as well as pedestrian walks. These streams which have a good flow of water are flat bottomed and indeed have trout in them.

A strong element of the new scheme will be the provision of a mixture of new housing both individual town houses and apartments for a range of buyers who would like to live in the town centre.

There will also be an element of shopping in newly reopened streets across the site.

The historic buildings will be preserved, notably the antique market and the Woolstaplers Hall.

A major principle of the scheme is that the new buildings will be no more than three and four storeys, thus preserving the traditional scale of Winchester. This will avoid building heights in any way competing with or intruding on views of the cathedral and maintain the pedestrian-friendly character of the town.

Huw Thomas's initial bird's eye view shows how Silver Hill could be brought back to life providing a new focus for the city. It will include affordable housing and carparking. More detailed plans will follow. As with the Peninsula Barracks scheme SAVE will be working with the best professional advisers to ensure the scheme is fully viable, practical and fundable.

It will also be designed so that it can be built in stages with individual owners, if appropriate, being involved in the various sites. It would not therefore be dependent on compulsory purchase.

SAVE will be developing the scheme over the next eight to ten weeks, looking for development partners with a view to submitting an outline scheme for planning permission following the precedent of Peninsula Barracks.

On this basis the first development could be underway in two years.

Marcus Binney Executive President of SAVE says "This new concept is still at a formative stage but is moving forward quickly. We know how passionately people in Winchester feel about this site and welcome thoughts, comments and suggestions."

For more information and images, please contact the SAVE Office on 0207 253 3500 or office@savebritainsheritage.org

Notes to editors:

SAVE Britain's Heritage has been campaigning for historic buildings since its formation in 1975 by a group of architects, journalists and planners. It is a strong, independent voice in conservation, free to respond rapidly to emergencies and to speak out loud for the historic built environment.

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