



Historic England

The Planning
Inspectorate
Via email

22/07/2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

re: CROWN/21026/0000005 – Haslar IRC, Dolphin Way, Haslar, Gosport, PO12 2AW

Thank you for consulting Historic England on these proposals.

Historic England Advice

The proposed IRC extension is close to several designated heritage assets but the only one that would be materially affected is the Haslar Barracks Conservation Area.

The barracks are a good example of a small barracks dating from the height of the Napoleonic wars and is of historical interest as a record of the way the British army became much larger and more complex during this conflict. They are also attractive buildings. The early 19th century had a strong tradition of design and craftsmanship that meant that even simple, functional buildings such as these were, in a quiet way, beautiful.

The barracks are almost completely hidden from view behind the high fencing of the IRC, making it almost impossible to appreciate their architectural qualities.

The current proposals involve placing three storey buildings surrounded by high fencing next to the historic barracks.

These proposals would not greatly harm the significance of the barracks when viewed in very narrow terms. Its setting is already poor; more fencing and large utilitarian buildings will make this only situation slightly worse.

As an aside, we need to be honest about the term utilitarian here. These buildings would be ugly – for all the warm words in the design and access and heritage statements the pressures



Historic England, 4th Floor, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA
Telephone 020 7973 3700 Facsimile 020 7973 3001
HistoricEngland.org.uk

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on budgets on a publicly funded project will mean these would be constructed as cheaply as possible. Economising on materials, design and detailing inevitably compromises quality.

There is at least some space between the proposed buildings and the barracks, which would reduce their presence when viewed from around the historic buildings and is welcome.

The proposals would also harm the barracks in a wider sense as they make improving the environment in this part of Gosport much harder. The IRC is probably a medium-term use. This site has been allocated for residential in the past and there is the potential here for the barracks to form the heart of a high-quality new residential development that reveals and reinforces their architectural qualities while creating a quality environment in which to live. The current proposals, by placing large and unattractive buildings on the site that would be difficult and expensive to reuse or replace, would make this long-term aim harder to achieve.

Recommendation

The National Planning Policy Framework requires conflicts between the conservation of heritage assets to be avoided or minimised and any harm, even of a low level, to be clearly and convincingly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (paragraphs 208, 213 and 215). The harm has been minimised by moving the proposed buildings away from the barracks, while the design and detailing of the buildings would be dealt with at reserved matters. Whether the public benefits of the proposals outweigh the harm is not for us to comment on.



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