Landscaping

The Trust is disappointed that landscape masterplan for Saw Close has not progressed or had further details added to the proposal. The proposals are still very basic and this secondary consideration of the public realm and the impact that landscaping will have on Saw CLose is not to be encouraged. None of the drawings or visualisations submitted illustrate the landscaping elements and their influence on the appearance of the scheme within its setting; even the very basic information provided on hard surfaces, plotted steps and seating/bike stands are not taken account of in any of the drawings. Details and positioning of planters, railings/cycle racks, lamp-posts, low-level lighting, public benches, litter-bins and advertising parameters for units should be clarified and required at this early stage so as to avoid visual and actual clutter later. Saw Close is an important space within the city, not just series of facades; it needs full 3D treatment and we regret that this application is to be determined without this information informing the judgement of its appropriateness.

Archaeology

We would like to correct a statement made in our original comment. Rather than The Market containing historic equipment, the cellar contains a lot of *modern* equipment which prevented a thorough survey of the cellar and any potential historic fabric or equipment. Gilmore’s 1694 map shows a cockpit on the site of The Market which suggests that this may well be the original cockpit of the theatre. Therefore, it is very important that a proper archaeological brief takes place in this vicinity.

We are also concerned about the frequent references to historic fabric as being of “little or no architectural significance” throughout the documentation in the proposals. A Historical Building Report from 2007 of the buildings of Saw Close found that there was a very diverse amount of historic fabric in Saw Close. There may well be much more of the original 19th century theatre behind later walls and there will almost certainly be archaeology beneath the surface. Saw Close had been a significant industrial and commercial centre for centuries. Furthermore, there is great likelihood of Roman archaeology below Saw Close, possibly fairly deep. One of the best mosaic floors was found beneath the Mineral Hospital and there were other mosaics found within the Bluecoat House and off Bridewell Lane. The Trust therefore hopes that that the archaeologist, Richard Sermon will make both a watching brief and hopefully an excavation a condition of the application. There will be layers of history beneath this site, both within and so close to the City walls which should be investigated and preserved.