

Westminster Abbey, Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3PP

Ref. No: 19/05268/FULL – 25th July 2019

Provision of visitor access to the west front of the Westminster Abbey through the construction of an ancillary ticketing building on the north side of the Abbey with associated landscaping works.

We were grateful to Ptolemy Dean for showing us around the Abbey, demonstrating to us the urgent need to improve the visitor entrance arrangements and the storage facilities. We were persuaded that an intervention is urgently needed.

We were also persuaded that the old Sacristy site is appropriate for the ticketing and storage building. While we are against losing any public open space, this particular bit of land, overshadowed by the Abbey, is not used for any recreational purpose, so will not be missed as such.

We are aware that compromises always have to be made – in this case one of them being the ramp arrangement at the West Front and the loss of the steps within the entrance arch. We would have welcomed another way of achieving step-free access but accept that this solution is undoubtedly superior to the others examined.

The detailing borrows from the Abbey itself. The visual interest of double buttresses, lanterns, and the simple sexfoil window will play a positive role in the townscape. The railings will not be an improvement, but they are an inevitable part of the scheme.

We were told that the refreshment kiosk outside the West Front would be removed. Please can we suggest that a condition of the planning permission is that no kiosks are allowed on or around the Abbey's land.

The Thorney Island Society